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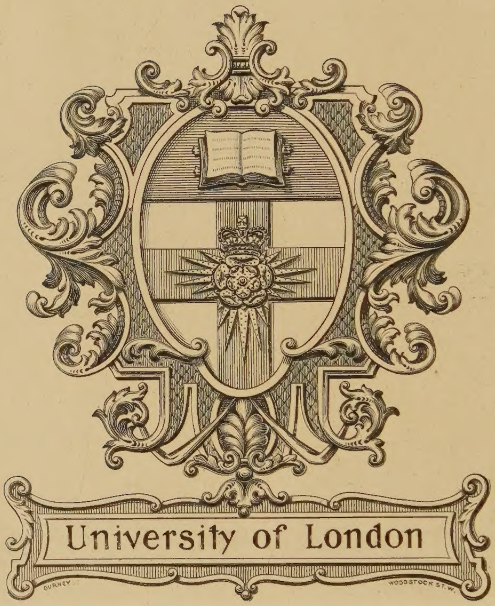
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TO

THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF APRIL 1887.

FOURTH VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

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Law and Justice (Ireland)—Jury-Packing—Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, Mr. Gedge 369

The Magistracy (Ireland)—Mr. Bannister, J.P., Cork—Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 369

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Parliament—Privilege—Reflections on the Speaker of this House—Question, Observations, Mr. Chaplin; Reply, Mr. Speaker:—Short debate thereon 370

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Supply—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

Harbour Loans—Resolution—

Indisposition of Mr. Speaker—Mr. Speaker retired, and the Clerk at the Table informed the House that Mr. Speaker had been compelled by indisposition to leave the House, and was unable to resume the Chair: — Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the Board of Trade should decide on the policy of the works to be undertaken, and that the functions of the Loan Commissioners should be limited to deciding on the sufficiency of the security offered by applicants for loans,"—(*Mr. Duff*) 386

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

Emigration of Pauper Children—Resolution—

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is expedient to relax the restrictions hitherto imposed by the Local Government Board on the emigration of pauper children, and to enter into negotiations with existing emigration agencies of established reputation, whereby such agencies may be empowered to emigrate pauper, orphan, neglected, and deserted children to Canada, or others of our Colonies, subject to reasonable regulations for the future oversight of the children,"—(*Mr. Samuel Smith*) 440

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn*.

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

SUPPLY—Order for Committee read—*continued.*

POST OFFICE—EXERCISE OF OFFICIAL PATRONAGE—

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Conybeare* :)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided* ; Ayes 65, Noes 128 ; Majority 63.—(Div. List, No. 87.)

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair" 457

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Storey* :)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Motion, by leave, *withdrawn* : — SUPPLY — Committee upon *Wednesday.*

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Order for Committee [*Progress 24th March*] read :—*Moved*, "That the Committee be deferred till To-morrow,"—(*Mr. Jackson*) .. 460

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :—Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Octavius Morgan*) 461

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee of Five Members, Two to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection.

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 210]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Dr. Farquharson*) .. 463

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question :" —After short debate, Question put :—The House *divided* ; Ayes 76, Noes 22 ; Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 88.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to* :—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow.*

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—JURY PANELS—Observations, Mr. Gedge .. 467

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy* :)—After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.* [2.30.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 5.

INDISPOSITION OF MR. SPEAKER—

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, and of his unavoidable absence from the House this day.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, Chairman of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Belfast Corporation (Lagan Bridge) Bill [*Lords*] (*by Order*)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 475

After short debate, Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

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ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—OXFORDSHIRE MILITIA—Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 477

INDIA (FINANCE, &c.)—DEFICIT ON THE NET REVENUE OF INDIAN RAILWAYS—Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 478

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"EGAN *v.* DWYER"—ASSAULT—Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) 478

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Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill [Bill 217] — Second Reading [First Night]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour*) 512

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After long debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Lea:*)—After further short debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

Supply—Army and Navy Estimates—Motion for a Select Committee—

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Army and Navy Estimates, and to report their observations thereon to the House,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) 602

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy:*)—Question put, and *agreed to:*—Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* next.

Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill—

Moved, "That Mr. Gilliat be a Member of the Select Committee on the Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill,"—(*Mr. O. V. Morgan*) 602

After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Order for Committee [*Progress 24th March*] read:—*Moved,* "That this House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into the said Committee" 603

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill—continued.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "next," and insert the word "fortnight,"—(*Mr. T. M. Healy*.)

Question proposed, "That the word 'next' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed 605

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "next," and insert the words "19th April,"—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'next' stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 111, Noes 63; Majority 48.—(Div. List, No. 89.)

Original Question again proposed 610

After short debate, *Moved,* "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Dr. Tanner*:)—After further short debate, Question put, and *negatived*:—Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 17th March*] 612

After short time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Tuesday* next.

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 210]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved,* "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Dr. Farquharson*) 615

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Hermon-Hodge*:)—After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 93, Noes 29; Majority 64.—(Div. List, No. 90.)

Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* 19th April.

ADJOURNMENT—

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Jackson*) .. 617

After short debate, Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Companies Acts Consolidation and Amendment Bill—*Considered* in Committee:—Resolution *agreed to,* and *reported*:—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. James Maclean, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Lees*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 218] .. 618

MOTIONS.

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 3) Bill—*Ordered* (*Dr. Clark, Mr. Angus Sutherland, Dr. M'Donald, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Lyell, Colonel Duncan, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Chance*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 219] 618

Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill—

Select Committee *nominated*;—List of the Committee 619

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE (SITES)—

Select Committee *appointed* and *nominated*:—List of the Committee 619

[2.30.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6.

INDISPOSITION OF MR. SPEAKER—

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, and of his unavoidable absence from the House this day.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and, after Prayers, counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July, 1855.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Belfast Corporation (*Lagan Bridge*) *Bill* [*Lords*] (*by Order*)—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time" 620
Moved, "That the Debate be adjourned till Friday 15th April,"—(*Mr. Sexton*:)—Motion *agreed to*:—Debate *adjourned* till *Friday* 15th April.

QUESTIONS.

COAL MINES, &c. REGULATION BILL — THE SECOND READING—Questions, Mr. Burt, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews), Mr. Deputy Speaker .. 621
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CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—THE WHITEBOY ACTS AND LATER STATUTES—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews), The Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) 624

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill [Bill 217] — SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE [SECOND NIGHT]—
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 624
After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Holmes*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

Church Sites (Compulsory Powers Repeal) Bill [Bill 53]—
Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time," — (*Mr. F. S. Powell*) 673
It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

Public Libraries Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Arthur Cohen, Mr. Collings, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Sir Lyon Playfair*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 220] 674

[5.55.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 7.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION—
The House being met, the Clerk at the Table again informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, and of his unavoidable absence from the House this day.
Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and, after Prayers, counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

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PUBLIC PETITIONS—

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Public Petitions have leave to sit this day, notwithstanding the sitting or the Adjournment of the House,—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Great Eastern Railway Bill—

Moved, "That the Bill be now considered,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) .. 674
Consideration *deferred* till *Tuesday* next.

QUESTIONS.

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MOTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE EASTER RECESS—
Moved, "That this House will, at the rising of the House this day, adjourn till Tuesday next,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*) .. 698
After short debate, Motion *agreed to*. [3.0. P.M.]

COMMONS, TUESDAY, APRIL 12.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION — MR. SPEAKER addressed the House as followeth:—
"I beg respectfully to make my acknowledgments to the House for the kind indulgence shown to me during my indisposition last week, and I also wish to express my thanks to the Chairman of Ways and Means for discharging the duties of this Chair during my absence" 701

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Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill [Bill 217] — SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE [THIRD NIGHT]—
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 709

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Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill—continued.

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Lord Henry Bruce*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

Glebe Lands Occupation (England) Bill [Bill 162]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Baggallay*) .. 810

Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Edward Harrington*:)—Question put, and *negatived*.

Original Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* 26th April.

Christchurch (Southampton) Charter (Correction of Error) Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 209]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir William Hart Dyke*) 811

Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next. [12.40.]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

———o———

Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill [Bill 217]—SECOND READING—ADJOURNED DEBATE [FOURTH NIGHT]—

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 812

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Baggallay*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

Solicitors' Annual Certificate Duty Bill [Bill 125]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Kenny*) .. 869

It being a quarter of an hour before six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow*. [5.50.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 14.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

———o———

Municipal Trust Company Bill [*Lords*] (*by Order*)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 870

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Dr. Tanner*.)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:"—Question put, and *agreed to*.

Main Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed*.

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———o———

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Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed*. 892

After long debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir William Harcourt*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill [Bill 1]—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress* 24*th March*] 983

After short time spent therein, Bill *reported*, without Amendment.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour*:)—Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read the third time, and *passed*.

Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) Bill [Bill 213]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read the third time,"—(*Mr. Plunket*) .. 988

Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read the third time, and *passed*.

First Offenders (*re-committed*) **Bill** [Bill 189]—

Order for Committee read:—*Moved*, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair,"—(*Mr. Howard Vincent*) 988

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill *considered* in Committee:—Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* 28th April.

MOTIONS.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders Bill—*Ordered* (*Baron Henry De Worms, Mr. Jackson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 222] 989

Royal Irish Constabulary (Officers) Bill—*Ordered* (*Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Mr. Jackson*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 223] 989

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Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time:"—Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—Debate *resumed* 1006

After long debate, *Moved*, "That Mr. Timothy Michael Healy be suspended from the Service of the House,"—(*Mr. William Henry Smith*:)—Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 118, Noes 52; Majority 66.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 1087

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Sexton*:)—Motion *agreed to:* — Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

Local Government Provisional Order (Highways) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Long, Mr. Ritchie*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 224] 1101

Trusts (Scotland) Act (1867) Amendment Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, The Lord Advocate*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 225] .. 1101

[12.40.]

LORDS, MONDAY, APRIL 18.

Law and Police—The Late Dog Regulations—Question, Observations, The Earl of Milltown; Reply, The Lord President of the Council (Viscount Cranbrook) 1101

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After long debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 370, Noes 269; Majority 101.

Division List, Ayes and Noes 1232

Main Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Justices Jurisdiction Bill [*Lords*] [Bill 207]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Lockwood*) .. 1237

Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Long, Mr. Ritchie*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 226] 1238

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[2.0.]

LORDS, TUESDAY, APRIL 19.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill (No. 63)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª,"—(*The Lord Privy Seal*) .. 1239

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now,") and insert ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Denman*)

After short debate, Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn*:—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Friday* next.

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THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—THE DIRECTION AND CONTROL—Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1247

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PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—ALLEGED FORGERY OF A LETTER—MR. PARNELL AND "THE TIMES"—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, Mr. Speaker, Mr. T. W. Russell 1249

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—Questions, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1250

MOTIONS.

HARBOURS OF REFUGE—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That, having regard to the recent fearful sacrifice of life in the Bristol Channel, and to the constantly recurring losses of life and property around the coasts of the United Kingdom, it is, in the opinion of this House, urgent that Her Majesty's Government should immediately take action to diminish these losses by the construction of suitable Harbours of Refuge."—(*Mr. Yeo*) 1250

After debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 81, Noes 86; Majority 5.—(Div. List, No. 93.)

POST OFFICE—SUNDAY DELIVERY OF LETTERS—RESOLUTION—

Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that, on and after Sunday the 26th of June next, the Sunday Delivery of Letters, &c., by letter-carriers and rural messengers should cease throughout the United Kingdom, except in those districts where, after the date named, the receivers of two-thirds of the correspondence of the district petition the Postmaster General for a Sunday Delivery,"—(*Dr. Clark*) 1289

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the whole question of Sunday labour, in connection with the Post Office, outside the Metropolitan district,"—(*Sir John Kennaway.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *negatived:*—Words *added:*—Main Question, as amended, put.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the whole question of Sunday labour, in connection with the Post Office, outside the Metropolitan District.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION—Observations, Mr. Mark Stewart .. 1298

[House counted out] [10.40]

COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Mersey Railway Bill—

Bill, as amended, *considered* 1300

After short debate, Bill to be read the third time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Police Force Enfranchisement Bill [Bill 17]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*Mr. Burdett-Coutts*) 1304

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

Land Tenure (Scotland) Bill [Bill 19]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time," — (*Mr. J. W. Barclay*) 1322

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months,"—(*Mr. R. G. Webster.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question:" —After debate, it being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

[*April* 20.]

MOTIONS.

Deeds of Arrangement Registration Bill—*Ordered* (*Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Howard Vincent, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Lawson, Sir Albert Rollit*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 231] 1353

Public Health Acts Amendment (Buildings in Streets) Bill—*Ordered* (*Captain Cotton, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Curzon*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 232] .. 1353

Prison (Officers' Superannuation) (Scotland) Bill—*Ordered* (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir Herbert Maxwell*); *presented,* and read the first time [Bill 233] 1353

[5.55.]

LORDS, THURSDAY, APRIL 21.

Irish Land Law Bill (No. 58)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ᵃ,"—(*The Lord Privy Seal*) .. 1354

Amendment *moved,* to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

After debate, Debate further adjourned till *To-morrow.* [10.30.]

COMMONS, THURSDAY, APRIL 21.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Sutton District Water Bill (*by Order*)—

Moved, "That the Consideration of the Bill be deferred until Thursday next,"—(*Mr Dodds*) 1397

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Consideration, as amended, *deferred* till *Thursday* next.

QUESTIONS.

CRIMINAL LUNATIC ASYLUM, DUNDRUM—ALLEGED ASSAULT—Questions, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1398

AFRICA (WEST)—THE GAMBIA—THE ACTING CHIEF MAGISTRATE—Question, Mr. Dillwyn; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) 1399

INDIA—EXPORT DUTIES ON RICE, &C.—Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1400

POOR LAW (IRELAND) — DAVID BROOKS, MASTER OF THE ARMAGH WORKHOUSE — Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1401

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) — SALARIES OF OFFICERS — Question, Mr. Macdonald Cameron; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1401

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE—"OFFICIAL PAID" LETTERS—Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1402

ARMY — "SPECIAL RESERVE" FOR QUARTERMASTERS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY — Question, Captain Cotton; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1403

CHANNEL ISLANDS—MILITIA LAW OF JERSEY—Question, Mr. Fenwick; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1404

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WESTERN PACIFIC—REGULATIONS FOR THE LABOUR TRAFFIC—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) 1405

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—CHARTER TO THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY—Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1406

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—TRANSFER OF SERGEANT MOLONEY TO MOUNT NORRIS—Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1406

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — RESIDENT MAGISTRATES—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1407

SAVING LIFE AT SEA—NOMINATION OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE—Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1407

INFIRMARIES (IRELAND)—WICKLOW COUNTY INFIRMARY—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1408

INDIA—THE UNCOVENANTED SERVICE—Question, Mr. King; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1408

EGYPT—THE SOUDAN—THE SUAKIN-BERBER RAILWAY — Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Surveyor General of Ordnance (Mr. Northcote) 1409

BURMAH (UPPER)—THE RUBY MINES—Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1409

NAVY—CONVERSION OF THE ROYAL MARINE CORPS—Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) 1410

MERCHANT SHIPPING—WRECK OF THE CHANNEL STEAMER "VICTORIA"—THE D'AILLY LIGHTHOUSE—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) .. 1410

INDIA—LEAVE OF ABSENCE—"URGENT PRIVATE AFFAIRS"—Question, Mr. Dillwyn; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1411

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE REV. MATTHEW RYAN, C.C.—Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1411

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ATTEMPTED MURDER OF MR. JEREMIAH HEGARTY, J.P.—Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Flynn; Answers, Mr. Speaker, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1412

ARMY (THE AUXILIARY FORCES) — VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY CORPS—Question, Mr. Coghill; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1413

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY CONVENTION—Questions, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1414

INDIA (MADRAS)—THE COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE—LAND SPECULATIONS —CASE OF MR. SULLIVAN—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1414

CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HER MAJESTY'S REIGN—SERVICE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith).. 1415

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—EMIGRATION—Question, Mr. Rankin; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1415

THE BUDGET—APPROPRIATION OF SURPLUS TO EDUCATION IN WALES—Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury Mr. W. H. Smith) 1416

WAR OFFICE—THE ORDNANCE COMMITTEE — DISCLOSURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS BY AN OFFICIAL—Question, Sir Henry Havelock-Allan; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1416

PARLIAMENT—THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE, 1882—RULE 9 (ORDER IN DEBATE)—SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER—Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, Mr. Speaker 1417

PARLIAMENT—RULES OF DEBATE—OFFENSIVE IMPUTATIONS ON MEMRERS OF THIS HOUSE—MR. DILLON AND THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON—Personal Explanation, Mr. Dillon 1417

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

WAYS AND MEANS—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Moved, That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable on Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say): on

Tea . . . . the pound . . Sixpence,"

—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1459

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Resolution to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2) Bill [Bill 196]—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Lord Advocate*) 1545

Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday* 5th May.

Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) **Extension Bill** [Bill 214]

Bill, as amended, *considered* 1547

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.* [1.45.]

LORDS, FRIDAY, APRIL 22.

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill (No. 63)—

House in Committee (according to Order) 1550

Bill *reported,* without Amendment; and to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

Irish Land Law Bill (No. 58) — SECOND READING [ADJOURNED DEBATE]—

Order of the Day, for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading, read:—Debate *resumed* accordingly 1551

After long debate, on Question, That ("now") stand part of the Motion?—*Resolved* in the *affirmative:*—Bill read 2ª accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* the 12*th of May* next.

[12.15. A.M.]

COMMONS, FRIDAY, APRIL 22.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

West Lancashire Railway Bill (*by Order*)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now taken into consideration,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 1613

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to:*—Bill *considered;* to be read the third time.

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QUESTIONS.

Government of Ceylon—Neutrality in Matters of Religion—Question, Mr. Gedge; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) 1621

Local Government (Ireland)—Town Commissioners of Portadown—Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1623

Law and Police (Ireland)—Attack upon Rev. Matthew Macaulay, Presbyterian Minister of Castleblayney — Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1624

Lighthouse Illuminants—The Experiments at South Foreland—Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1625

War Office — The Army Purchase Commission — Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) 1626

Merchant Shipping — The "Mary Mark" — Question, Mr. W. F. Lawrence; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1627

Trade and Commerce—The Petroleum Trade—Question, Mr. Lafone; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1627

Russia — Imprisonment of Mr. J. W. Robinson, a British Subject — Question, Mr. Joicey; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1627

Egypt—Administrative Reforms—Mr. Clifford Lloyd—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1628

Post Office—Credits to the Australian Governments, 1886—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1628

Post Office (Postal Services) — Conveyance of the Indian and Australian Mails—Foreign Subsidies — Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 1629

Butter Substitutes Bill and Oleomargarine Bill—Nomination of Select Committee—Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1629

India (Madras)—Suspension of Mr. Crole, Collector of Madura—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1630

Fishery Board (Scotland)—Constitution and Functions—Question, Mr. J. W. Barclay; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1631

Admiralty—Vacancies—Circulars—Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1631

The Newspaper Press — Conveyance of Parcels by Trains — The Alleged Post Office Order—Question, Mr. Puleston; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1632

Parliament—Rules of Debate—Offensive Imputations on Members of this House—Mr. Dillon and the Marquess of Hartington—Personal Explanations, The Marquess of Hartington, Mr. Dillon; Questions, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. John Morley; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1632

Parliament—Business of the House—Question, Mr. Childers; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1642

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Supply—Order for Committee read; Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

Market Rights—Motion for an Address—

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire as to the extent to which market rights, and rights affecting places where markets are held, are in the hands (1) of public bodies, and (2) of private persons, or bodies of persons. To inquire generally how such rights are exercised, and particularly what accommodation is given in return for charges levied; in what ratio market tolls stand to the value of goods on which they are levied, and how far the regulation of markets by means of bye-laws or otherwise, market rents, stallages, and tolls, and tolls affecting market towns, are restrictive of trade. To report as to the advisability of compelling the transfer of all such rights to local authorities; of prohibiting the farming of tolls and stallages, of prohibiting the placing of restrictions on the sale of goods in a market that may be lawfully sold elsewhere, of providing by means of the incomes from markets or otherwise for the extinction of the capital account chargeable to such markets, and for declaring all markets to be free and open,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh*) 1642

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question:"—After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair:"—

High Court of Justice—Publication of Details in Divorce and Indecent Cases — Observations, Mr. Samuel Smith; Reply, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster:)—Short debate thereon .. 1660

Education Department—Political Meetings in Schoolrooms—Observations, Mr. H. Gardner; Reply, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke:)—Short debate thereon 1637

England—Boycotting and Intimidation—Observations, Mr. Newnes: —Debate thereon 1687

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—*considered* in Committee—Navy Estimates—

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £211,300, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the Expenses of the Admiralty Office, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1888" 1713

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill—

Bill *considered* in Committee [*Progress 5th April*] 1714

After some time spent therein, Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* next.

Ways and Means— }
Customs and Inland Revenue Bill }

Resolution [April 21] *reported,* and *agreed to:*—Bill *ordered* (*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson*) 1757

Limited Owners (Scotland) Bill—

Select Committee *nominated:*—List of the Committee 1757

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Land Transfer Bill (No. 57)—

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a},"—(*The Lord Chancellor*) .. 1758

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months,")—(*The Lord Arundell of Wardour.*)

After debate, Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn* :—Original Motion *agreed to* :—Bill read 2^{a} accordingly. [7.45.]

COMMONS, MONDAY, APRIL 25.

PRIVILEGE.

PRIVILEGE — PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE — A BOGUS PETITION — RESOLUTION—

Leave given to the Select Committee on Public Petitions to make a Special Report:—Special Report *brought up*, and read 1776

Moved, "That the Order [6th April], that the Petition of Ratepayers of Haggerston, in favour of the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill, do lie upon the Table, be read, and discharged,"—(*Sir Charles Forster*) 1778

After short debate, *Moved*, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh* :)—Question put, and *agreed to* :—Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

QUESTIONS.

IRISH LAND COURT—DELAYS IN ROSCOMMON — Question, Dr. Commins; Answer, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) .. 1779

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE POST OFFICE AT LETTERKENNY—Question, Sir Charles Lewis; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) .. 1780

MERCHANT SHIPPING — BOATS OF OCEAN-GOING VESSELS — Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1781

COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS—LIGHTHOUSE AT ARDGLASS—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) 1782

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — MAIL ACCOMMODATION TO NEWTOWNARDS AND DOWNPATRICK — Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1782

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — DELAYS WITH THE COUNTY DOWN RAILWAY COMPANY — Question, Colonel Waring; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1783

BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MR. J. A. IRWIN, CARRICKAWILKIN, CO. ARMAGH—Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) .. 1783

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—BANTRY AND DUNNO PETTY SESSIONS—DISTRICT INSPECTOR CRANE — Question, Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) .. 1784

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THE SKINNERS' ESTATE, DRAPERSTOWN — Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1784

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS — SLAUGHTER OF DAIRY COWS IN DUBLIN—Question, Mr. W. J. Corbet; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1786

POST OFFICE—"CARTES TELEGRAMMES"—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) 1786

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AFRICA (WEST COAST)—THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY—SENTENCE OF DEATH ON SHAW—Questions, Mr. S. Williamson, Mr. Childers, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1787

LUNATIC ASYLUMS—ATTENDANCE OF BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS—Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1789

POLICE (METROPOLIS)—ABOLITION OF MARLBOROUGH STREET POLICE COURT—Question, Mr. Pitt-Lewis; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1790

ADMIRALTY—THE SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY (IRELAND)—SHIPYARD ON THE FOYLE—Question, Mr. Justin M'Carthy; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) 1791

INDIA (BENGAL)—MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF STRONG DRINK—Question, Mr. S. Smith; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) 1792

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN WALES—OFFICIAL AND SWORN INTERPRETERS—Question, Mr. S. Smith; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1792

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1882—A SELECT COMMITTEE—Question, Mr. H. F. H. Elliot; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1793

EXCISE (METROPOLIS)—CONVICTIONS FOR SELLING ADULTERATED BEER—Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 1793

PUBLIC HEALTH—M. PASTEUR'S TREATMENT OF HYDROPHOBIA—Question, Mr. M'Laren; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) 1794

PRISONS (IRELAND) — ACCOMMODATION IN IRISH GAOLS — Question, Mr. Nolan; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1795

IRISH LAND LAW BILL — PERPETUITY LEASEHOLDERS — Question, Mr. Marum; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) 1795

ADMIRALTY—COLOUR SERGEANTS OF THE ROYAL MARINES — Question, Captain Price; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) 1796

CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HER MAJESTY'S REIGN—THE NAVAL REVIEW—THE PENSIONERS' RESERVE—Question, Captain Price; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) .. 1796

WAYS AND MEANS—THE FINANCIAL PROPOSALS—THE LOCAL LOAN—Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 1797

DISTRESS IN THE METROPOLIS—Question, Mr. Flower; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) 1797

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—BRITISH CONSULAR JURISDICTION—THE ORDER IN COUNCIL—Question, Mr. Buchanan; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1798

BULGARIA—SPEECH OF CONSUL GENERAL JONES AT PHILIPPOPOLIS—Question, Mr. P. Stanhope; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1798

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Afghanistan—Reported Disturbances—Question, Mr. Legh; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst) .. 1799

North American Fisheries—Correspondence—Questions, Mr. Gourley; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) 1799

Parliamentary Elections (England and Wales)—Alleged Boycotting and Intimidation in England—Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Sir Charles Lewis, Mr. Cobb; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) 1800

Parliament—Rules of Debate—Offensive Imputations on Members of this House—Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Parnell—Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick), Mr. Speaker 1801

Ways and Means—Allocation of the Carriage Tax in the Metropolis—Question, Mr. R. G. Webster; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) 1803

Landlord and Tenant (Scotland)—Procedure under the Crofters Act—Question, Dr. Clark; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) 1804

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered* in Committee—

(In the Committee.)

Moved, "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Seven Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Three Pence Halfpenny;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Two Pence Halfpenny;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds,"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 1804

After long debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Other Resolutions *moved*, and *agreed to.*

Moved, "That the Chairman do report the Resolutions to the House" .. 1935

After short debate, Question put, and *agreed to*:—Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow;* Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

Supply—Army and Navy Estimates—Motion for a Select Committee [Adjourned Debate]—

Order of the Day for Adjourned Debate on Motion for Appointment of Select Committee [5th April] 1936

Adjourned Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) COMMISSION (INVERNESS SCHEME)—MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS—

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the scheme of the Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission, now lying upon the Table of the House, for the management of the endowments in the burgh and county of Inverness, known as the Royal Academy, the Mackintosh Farr Fund, the Bell Fund, the Duncan Bequest in so far as applicable to educational purposes, the Ettles Bequest, the Denoon, Colin Davidson, and Logan Bequests, the Laird of Mackintosh Bequest, and the Hector Fraser Bequest; but in so far only as concerns the Mackintosh Farr Fund,"—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh*) 1937

After short debate, Question put:—The House *divided;* Ayes 24, Noes 151; Majority 127.—(Div. List, No. 95.)

Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment Bill [*Lords*]—

Read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House and Two by the Committee of Selection 1946

Intermediate Education (Wales) Bill—*Ordered* (*Mr. Kenyon, Mr. Puleston, Mr. Walsh, Admiral Mayne*); *presented*, and read the first time [Bill 235] .. 1946

[2.0.]

LORDS.

SAT FIRST.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21.

The Lord Churchill, after the death of his father.

COMMONS.

NEW WRIT ISSUED.

MONDAY, APRIL 18.

For *Taunton, v.* The Hon. Samuel Charles Allsopp, now Baron Hindlip, called up to the House of Peers.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

SECOND SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FOURTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1887.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 31*st March*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Irish Land Law (58); Land Transfer (57); Merchant Shipping (Transfer of Registry, &c.) * (59).
Second Reading—Sheriff's Consolidation * (50); County Courts (Expenses) * (48).
Committee—Report—Lunacy * (8).
Third Reading—Electric Lighting Act (1882) Amendment * (49), and *passed*.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92. and 93. be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl CADOGAN): My Lords, in rising to invite your Lordships once again to address yourselves to legislative proposals for dealing with the land and land tenure in Ireland, I do not intend to waste the time of the House with protestations of my inability and incompetence to deal with a subject which the greatest master of legislation probably of this or any other country has lately described as the most difficult, and most complex, subject with which in the long course of his political career he has ever had to deal. No one can realize more fully than I do the great difficulty of the task which at short notice, and in circumstances of some peculiarity, it has fallen upon me to perform. I shall endeavour to do my duty to the House by stating as succinctly, as straightforwardly, and as clearly as I can the position of the Government with respect to this important question, and the provisions of the Bill which I have the honour to ask the House to read for the first time, and in doing so, I shall simply throw myself upon the indulgence and forbearance of the House. My Lords, it will be some relief to the House that I should at once state that it is not my intention, in dealing with this matter, to ask your Lordships to revert to the earlier chapters of Irish history, to which it has been the custom of all speakers on the Irish Question to invite their hearers to turn their attention. I shall not ask your Lordships to review the events that took place in the golden era of comfort and happiness of which we have heard so much lately. I believe I shall be able to address myself to this subject without once calling attention to that important, but, in my opinion, overrated event — the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. I have limited my notice, and I intend to limit my remarks, to the more recent periods of legislation with reference to the Land Question for this reason. Nothing has appeared to me more remarkable in the study which I have been able to give to this question than the entire absence of unity, not only of detail, but of principle, which has characterized legislation with reference to land in Ireland, at all events, during the first half of this century. Up to and including 1860 the principles upon which that legislation was founded and guided may be roughly stated to have been those of the Common Law, upon which land legislation in this country was also founded. My Lords, in 1860, the Act which was passed for the reform of the tenure of land in Ireland entirely reversed the principle upon which, up to that time, legislation had been founded. It substituted for feudalism and the tenure of the Common Law a principle of absolute or implied freedom of contract; and for 10 years, between 1860 and 1870, it may be said that the law relating to land in Ireland rested solely and entirely on freedom of contract. After 10 years the policy was again completely reversed, and we come then to the great Act for which we are indebted to the late Prime Minister (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), which, if it did not reverse, at all events largely limited, altered, and controlled the principle of free contract upon which, up to that time, legislation had been founded. I need hardly remind you of the provisions of this great Act. My object is only to show that the principle then adopted by Mr. Gladstone has been maintained ever since. The Act of 1870, as your Lordships know, legalized the Ulster custom and other customs wherever they existed in Ireland, and in the absence of any custom it gave the tenants two great rights, which constituted in themselves a tenure, apart from absolute freedom of contract. It gave him compensation for improvements and compensation for disturbance. I need hardly refer to the Bright Clauses of that Act for purchase, because the subject of purchase is one with which the Government has to deal as a separate question, and on a subsequent occasion. From and after the year 1870 we appear to have arrived at last at a sound and permanent principle of policy. The Act of 1881, under which the tenure of land is at present regulated in Ireland, to use the words of Mr. Gladstone, "limited and regulated still further the principle of freedom of contract." It enacted what were known as the "three F's." It gave to the tenant free sale of his interest to a third party, under restrictions and with the consent or subject to the veto of his landlord. It gave fair rents, by the establishment of Courts which were empowered to revise rents. It gave fixity of tenure, by constituting judicial terms which were vested in the tenants subject to the special performance of the condition under which they held. Generally, it may be said, that the Act of 1881 completely abolished freedom of contract, and created that system under which we are at present, I was about to say, suffering—namely, that of dual ownership. My object in the cursory recapitulation of these Acts has been to point out the principle upon which legislation is now founded, and the principle, therefore, upon which the Government are constrained to act in dealing with this great question. It has been said that the aim and object of legislation during the years to which I have just referred has been to improve the position of the rich at the expense of the position of the poor. My Lords, if that had been said merely by those whose object it is to find fault with all legislation which has received the approval of Parliament, I should take no further notice of that remark; but I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that this opinion has received apparently the sanction of a gentleman who, from his official position and the high character which he enjoys throughout the country, is entitled to the greatest respect. I refer to General Buller, the present Under Secretary for Ireland. My Lords, it is unnecessary for me to say, in entering my protest against one sentiment which he has expressed in the evidence before the Royal Commission, that I do so with the greatest possible respect and reluctance. General Buller is reported to have said, in reply to a question—

> "You have got very ignorant poor people, and the law should look after them, instead of which it has only looked after the rich."

Now, the late Prime Minister, as I understand, has used this answer of General Buller as an argument to show that the present condition of the law in Ireland is such as to require remedies of the most drastic character. Nothing I can say would carry the weight which attaches to any statement by General Buller. But I must call to my assistance the evidence of the one man in the whole country who is best qualified by his antecedents and authority to give an answer to General Buller, and to explain what in reality has been the object of our recent legislation in Ireland. I need hardly say I refer to Mr. Gladstone himself. Mr. Gladstone, in 1881, in introducing his Land Bill, said—

> "It is commonly said that the iniquity of the Irish Land Laws is a main reason for legislation on Irish Land. Now, Sir, equity and iniquity may be in great part a comparative; but I must say that if we are to proceed on that principle of comparison, I think it is an exaggeration to describe the Land Laws of Ireland as iniquitous. . . . . . The Land Laws of Ireland chiefly differ from the Land Laws of England in the very special provisions which they present to us on behalf of the tenant."—(3 *Hansard*, [260] 891.)

It is a very poor compliment to the right hon. Gentleman, after all the efforts which his genius has made during the past years, efforts in which he was strenuously supported by noble Lords opposite, to say that the laws at present in force in Ireland are made for the rich at the expense of the poor. The Act of 1881 forms the basis of the legislation which Her Majesty's Government now propose to the House. When they came into Office they found themselves face to face with a condition of things which I will not detain your Lordships with describing, for it is known to the House. In the difficulty which that state of things created, the Government determined that before they proceeded with any legislation with regard to land in Ireland, they would advise Her Majesty to issue a Royal Commission, the Reference to which I may briefly state. My Lords, that Commission was directed to inquire to what extent, if any, and in what parts of Ireland, the operation of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, was affected either by combinations to resist payment of rent or by an exceptional fall in the prices of produce. That Commission consisted of five gentlemen, and it sat for five months. There is something pathetic in the manner in which the Commission described the labours through which they passed. They spent five months in reviewing all those abstruse questions; they sat 60 times, and examined 300 witnesses, whose evidence fills 1,000 pages of that vast Blue Book which is in the hands of your Lordships. At the conclusion of their labours, those five Commissioners produced three Reports, one of them differing only slightly from the Report of the majority. They reported first that the operation of the Land Act of 1831 had been affected by combinations, except in the case of Ulster; secondly, that Boycotting had largely prevailed; thirdly, that there had been a considerable fall in prices of produce in Ireland; and they made a further Report with reference to the maintenance of law and order in Ireland, which it is not my province to-night to touch upon. That being the gist of the Report of the Commissioners, I will state shortly their recommendations. In the first place, they recommended that a shorter period for the revision of judicial rents than 15 years should be fixed; and they recommended that that revision should take place every five years. They further recommended that such revision should be specially applied to rents fixed prior to 1886. They also recommended that the judicial rents should be fixed with relation to the price of produce—what is called a "produce rent." My Lords, before I pass to the further recommendations of the Commissioners, I think it well to say that this recommendation is one to which Her Majesty's Government have found it impossible to give effect. I can hardly give the House all the reasons which have guided Her Majesty's Government to this decision; but I think it will be sufficient if I say broadly that the Government regard that period of 15 years, during which the judicial rents were to run, and before which they were not to be revised, as a period which was intended by Parliament to be a permanent settlement, and one with which it would be highly inexpedient to tamper. The Commissioners themselves have said, in their recommendation, that it is most undesirable to disturb an arrangement which was understood to be a permanent settlement. Further than that, we have the dissentient Report of my noble Friend behind me (Lord Milltown), who has given strong reasons why it is inexpedient that this recommendation should be adopted. He argued that high prices were very often concurrent with bad years, and that the tenant might thus have a high rent fixed in a time of great distress. He also raised a point which is, I think, ingenious—namely, that you ought in this matter to consider the value of the tenant-right which is in the tenant. That is to say, that if the tenant has the right to sell his interest in his holding, and, if that holding is subject to a revision of the judicial rent within a period shorter than 15 years, you are bound to consider that there is a possibility, if not a probability, that the amount of rent might be increased. It is obvious that the tenant-right, in the event of such a rise in rent, would be decreased. We have another witness to the undesirability of carrying out this recommendation of the Commission, and that witness is no less a person than Lord Hartington. In a speech he made last night, he spoke as follows:—

> "It appears to me that in spite of all this it is an absolutely open question whether, in the first place, rents are excessive in Ireland, and, in the second place, whether, if excessive, such excessive rents are being exacted. Therefore, it may be—probably is—wise and reasonable for Parliament to abstain from any attempt to deal anew with the settlement of rents fixed by the Irish Land Act of 1881."

My Lords, more than that, if you were to disturb a settlement intended to be permanent and guaranteed by Parliament, you would lead the Irish tenants and people to believe that there was no prospect of any finality in regard to legislation on the question of Irish land. The Royal Commission further recommended that the leaseholders should be admitted to the benefits of the Act of 1881, that a power should be given to the middleman to make a surrender of his interest, and that in cases of ejectment for non-payment of rent the period of redemption should run from the date of the verdict. I do not think it necessary to trouble your Lordships with any of the other recommendations of the Commission. Now, my Lords, with this Report before them the Government determined at once to deal with the state of things which was created by the Land Act of 1881. There is, however, one subject mentioned in the Report which, perhaps, I had better at once deal with and clear out of the way before I proceed further. That, my Lords, is the great question of land purchase. I have referred, in passing, very briefly to what are known as the Bright Clauses in the Act of 1870. Those provisions were supplemented by the further clauses enabling advances to be made to tenants in the Act of 1881. The Bright Clauses appear to have been practically useless; indeed, they appear to have been used in about 600 or 700 cases all told. Under the Act of 1881 more advantage was taken by the tenants of the facilities of purchase offered to them; but it was not until the Act of my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor of Ireland was passed that any tangible advance was made in assisting the tenants of Ireland to purchase their holdings. My Lords, that Act met with a considerable amount of success; but it is the opinion of the Government that this question requires a still greater amount of attention. My Lords, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government the time has arrived when a further large measure must be formulated dealing with the question of purchase by tenants of their holdings in Ireland. To that we mainly look for the settlement of the great questions which unhappily disturb that country; and in that alone I believe will be found a final solution. The question of land in Ireland will then be dealt with by the Government in two parts—the first in a Bill, which I have now the honour to lay before your Lordships, which will deal with questions arising out of the Act of 1881—questions of considerable urgency and great importance. It will be followed by a measure which, as I said before, will accomplish that which will alone permanently settle the difficulties with which we have to contend—in other words, the abolition of the dual ownership created by the Act of 1881. I will now proceed to explain to your Lordships the provisions of the Bill which I am about to introduce. First, I will endeavour to make it clearer to your Lordships by dividing the three principal subjects with which this Bill proposes to deal as follows:—First, questions with regard to tenure; secondly, questions relating to appeals; and, thirdly, questions relating to equitable jurisdiction. Under the head of tenure, the first subject which I will approach, and with which I think I need not occupy your Lordships at great length, is the question, recommended by the Royal Commissioners, of the admission of leaseholders to the benefits of the Act of 1881. The Bill proposes that those holding leases in Ireland who were excluded by the Bill of Mr. Gladstone in 1881 should now be included in the provisions of this measure. These leaseholders number, roughly speaking, about 150,000, and I think that when the Bill is reviewed it will be found that there is no part of it which will have such a general acceptation or be so important in its results as that which I have just mentioned. My Lords, there is a clause which provides that leaseholders in *bonâ fide* occupation of their holdings shall, on the passing of this Act, be deemed to be tenants of their present tenancies, in like manner and subject to the same conditions as if their leases had expired on the passing of this Act. I do not think it is necessary to justify this proposition. I am aware that Mr. Gladstone, when he introduced his Bill in 1881, appeared to think that there was some principle involved in the exclusion of leaseholders from the Act. No doubt it was desirable in the course of that process to which I have before alluded, the gradual abolition of freedom of contract—it was desirable, at any rate, to appear to retain some shred of that freedom in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. But I cannot say that even in his exclusion of leaseholders he has altogether refrained from dealing with them, because leaseholders under the contracts into which they had entered were bound at the expiration of their term to give up their holdings freely to the landlord who was owner; but under the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman in 1881 he broke to this extent into the conditions of the tenancy of the leasehold, that he enacted that at the expiration of the term the tenants should be considered as tenants from year to year. It is an absolute fact that in excluding leaseholders from the Act of 1881 Mr. Gladstone did not save his principle by excluding them entirely, and, under these circumstances and for these reasons, however imperfectly described, Her Majesty's Government recommend that leaseholders should in future be admitted to the benefits of the Act; thus there will no longer be two classes of tenants living side by side under entirely different conditions, the one class having rights which are denied to the other. Without further remark I will pass on to the further clauses of the Bill. There is a provision with reference to town parks which may puzzle some of your Lordships who are not conversant with the affairs of Ireland as much as I confess it puzzled me. The Royal Commission recommended that, under certain limitations, town parks should be included in the Act of 1881. I understand that a town park in Ireland is a holding in the immediate neighbourhood of a town. So long as it is occupied by a resident in that town it is considered a town park, and, being so, was excluded from the operation of the Act of 1881. The complaint made by tenants of these parks is this—that because they happen to live in a town, because they occupy a farm the occupation of which they claim to be strictly in accordance with what is legally designated a farm holding, yet, because that holding is in the neighbourhood of a town, they are precluded from going to Court to have a fair rent fixed. As I said before, the Commission recommended that town parks should be included in the Bill.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: Under certain limitations.

EARL CADOGAN: Under certain limitations. Well, my Lords, we did not agree that it would be possible to admit all the town parks; but what we do mean to do is to alter the definition of town park in our Act; and in the future, under this Act, the definition will be limited to those which are used as accommodation land, and not as a farm. To that extent the recommendations of the Royal Commission will be adopted. I now come to a more important provision which is contained in the Bill, one which refers to proceedings in ejectment—in other words, to evictions—a subject which has attracted so much and so widespread attention in the country during the last 12 months. It is hardly necessary for me in such an Assembly as this to enter at any length into an explanation of the right of ejectment, or, as it is more generally called, eviction. It is obvious that the right of eviction—which is simply the right of the owner to re-enter upon the occupation of his property when the tenant has forfeited the occupation by the omission to fulfil the conditions under which he has contracted to occupy—is a provision which may be said to be the only ultimate resort when the landowner fails to exact from the tenant the fulfilment of the terms of the occupation. It is difficult for me, my Lords, to deal with this subject without, perhaps, exciting sensibilities upon one side or the other. No one is more ready than I am to acknowledge that, taken altogether, it may be said that the landlords of Ireland in times past, and in recent times, have, with some notable exceptions, exercised this right, which legally belongs to them, with mercy and with forbearance. At the same time, scenes have taken place which it is impossible for us not to notice; and feelings on this subject have been aroused with which any Government, to whichever side in politics it might belong, is bound to do its best to deal. I may say further than this, that the power of eviction and the exercise of it is, in our view, not limited merely to the freewill of the landlord who exercises the right. It is impossible for any impartial observer of ejectments in Ireland not to notice that there is one potent factor in reference to this matter, to which I think attention has been insufficiently drawn—namely, the establishment by law of a six months' period of redemption. A six months' period is granted to defaulting tenants, within which they are entitled to re-enter and to redeem the interest from which they have been temporarily evicted. The effect of this period of redemption has been this—that in order to make this six months' period of redemption run—at the end of which the landlord can finally exercise his right of dispossessing the tenant of his holding—it is necessary under the present law for the landlord to take proceedings and obtain a judgment in ejectment; and, not only that, but he must actually execute the judgment. Not only must judgment be obtained, but the landlord must exercise his right of ejectment before the six months' period of redemption is permitted to begin to run. See the position in which that places many landlords in Ireland. They do not object to the period of redemption being postponed. The landlord who has obtained judgment in ejectment cannot always exercise his own discretion as to when he executes that judgment, for he is often forced to execute it in order to make the six months' period of redemption begin to run. The Commissioners recommend that in cases of judgments for non-payment of rent the period of redemption should run from the time of verdict or decree, and not from the execution of judgment. We propose that notice shall be issued by the landlord, in a form which will be found in the Schedule of the Bill, when he obtains a writ in ejectment from the Court; that the landlord shall be required to serve that notice upon the tenant in the manner prescribed by the Court; that when the tenant receives that notice he shall, *ipso facto*, become a caretaker, and that the prescribed six months within which redemption can take place shall commence to run from that day. I should like to point out to the House the benefit that will accrue to both the landlords and tenants under the provision which I have explained. The House will perceive that the recommendation of the Commission was that the period of redemption should commence to run from the date of the decree, which would leave the tenant in a worse position than that which he now occupies, as it would be necessary, if the recommendation of the Commissioners were adopted, for the landlord to eject the tenant immediately after the decree was issued. Under the present proposal the six months for redemption will commence to run with the serving of the notice upon the tenant, and thus the tenant need not be evicted, while the landlord will be saved the trouble and expense of evicting the tenant, who will, *ipso facto*, become a caretaker without having been first evicted. I do not think that I am overstating the case when I say that the effect of this proposed provision will be to reduce the number of evictions by one-half. I cannot give the House the exact figures relating to the subject, but I do not think that I am far wrong when I say that nearly four-fifths of the evictions in Ireland have occurred at the time of the execution of the judgment in ejectment, and not at the expiration of the six months' period for redemption. I, of course, admit that it will still be in the power of the landlord to evict the tenant after he becomes a caretaker, as he can at present, but the tenant, in that case, will still be entitled to his six months' period for redemption. My belief is that in the end this provision will be found to be of great advantage to both the parties concerned. Under the present system the tenant has to be evicted in the first place, before he can be re-admitted as a caretaker, whereas under this provision he will, *ipso facto*, upon the receipt of the notice, become a caretaker without having been evicted. The next class with whom the Bill proposes to deal is that of the middle-man. I am not sure that the middle-man will excite feelings of much sympathy in the minds of Englishmen, as they may, perhaps, not entirely appreciate the position he occupies in Ireland. They are a class of men not specially in favour in the Metropolis. The position of the middle-man in Ireland is this—he takes a holding from the landowner and he sub-lets it to different tenants. These sub-tenants may, under the Act of 1881, go into the Land Court and get their rents reduced, when the middle-man may find himself placed in the unfortunate position of finding that his sub-tenants have got their rents which they have to pay him reduced, while he himself is debarred from getting his own chief rent reduced, so that it may be that the rents he receives are less than which he pays to his superior landlord. This state of things is believed by Her Majesty's Government to constitute a genuine grievance on the part of the middle-man, and, therefore, it is proposed by the Bill that where a middle-man finds himself in this uncomfortable position he shall be entitled to surrender his tenancy under certain conditions. I shall occupy your Lordships' attention for only a short time in dealing with the second great division of the Bill, which relates to the question of appeals. In 1884 Sir George Trevelyan called the attention of Parliament to the necessity for strengthening the Court of Appeal in the performance of its important duties, and he introduced a Bill to carry out his object. That Bill, however, did not obtain the assent of Parliament, and there is no doubt that some complaints have been made as to the inadequate manner in which the appeal business in connection with the Land Act has been carried on. We propose to enable the Lord Lieutenant to constitute an Appeal Commission consisting of two Divisions, and to associate with them the ordinary Judges of the Supreme Court or the most experienced of the County Court Judges, and we propose to return to the original practice of the Land Commission and to allow the parties to employ valuers free of expense in all cases where they think it necessary. I now come to a subject which, I confess, I approach with some fear lest I shall be unable clearly to convey our intentions to the House — namely, the equitable jurisdiction which we propose to set up under this Bill. By the term equitable jurisdiction I mean proposals for the relief of insolvent tenants, especially those who have become insolvent through no fault of their own, but in consequence of misfortunes over which they have had no control. In dealing with this question I must again refer to the speech which was delivered last night by Lord Hartington. He said—

> "I cannot entertain any doubt that if Parliament and the Government see their way to make some alteration for the recovery of rents and which will regulate evictions, if they can see their way to conferring upon some competent legal authority or Courts of Law some greater equitable powers, which shall give an assurance to the country that the extreme remedy of eviction shall only be resorted to when the process is not only legal but also just and equitable—any such change in the law, though I cannot hope that it would satisfy public opinion in Ireland, will go far to satisfy the opinion and the conscience of the people of the United Kingdom."

It has been urged that there is no method of relief held out to the insolvent tenant, except that of going into the Bankruptcy Court; but the view of the Government is that when you speak of insolvent tenants you are speaking of persons who may be divided into at least three classes. There are, in the first place, the cases in which tenants are insolvent from causes not only over which they have no control but which are merely temporary, and who, if reasonable time is afforded them, will be able to meet their liabilities. There are, in the second place, those who are insolvent from no fault of their own, and who have no reasonable prospect of ever meeting their liabilities. In the third place, there are the cases of those who are unable to meet their liabilities from causes arising from their own improvidence and extravagance, and for whom it is not possible to claim the sympathy either of Parliament or the nation. With regard to the first of these classes —namely, the tenants who are insolvent but who might be able to meet their liabilities if reasonable time were given them—the Government do not think it necessary that they should be driven into the Bankruptcy Court. In such cases Her Majesty's Government propose that the County Court Judge, while granting the landlord the judgment to which he is entitled, shall direct a reasonable stay of execution; and for as long a period as the Judge shall determine the tenant shall not be removed from possession of his holding. It is hoped that during the period thus given a reasonable settlement may, in most cases, be arrived at between the landlord and the tenant, and that many evictions will thereby be prevented. In dealing with the other two classes, who are to a certain extent driven into bankruptcy, we provide that the County Court Judge shall have the power, for all purposes for which the Bankruptcy Court exists in Dublin, of a Judge in Bankruptcy in his own County Court, and that his jurisdiction shall extend over his own county. As the Bankruptcy Law is only administered in Dublin, the cost to a tenant who voluntarily goes into bankruptcy or the landlord who drives the tenant into bankruptcy is larger than is desirable, inasmuch as the cases to which the provisions of the Bill apply are limited to holdings, the rental of which does not exceed £50 per annum. Therefore, by giving County Court Judges jurisdiction in every county, we have to a great extent simplified the jurisdiction of the Court of Bankruptcy, and brought it within the reach of tenants all over Ireland. With reference to the class of insolvent tenants who are insolvent from circumstances over which they have no control, and from no fault of their own, we propose as follows:—Where inability to pay arises from no misconduct or improvidence on the part of the tenant the County Court Judge may order a composition of the old debts, including the rent, and permit the tenant to continue in occupation of his holding so long as the Judge may determine, paying for the use of it a fair rent to be fixed by the Court. The general principle upon which this clause proceeds is that considerable indulgence may be shown to a man whose insolvency may be innocent, and whose good faith and rectitude are established to the satisfaction of the Court. And lastly, in the case of those insolvent tenants who have arrived at the last state of insolvency from their own fault, extravagance, idleness, or other causes, they will be left to the operation of the ordinary law of the land; and with reference to them the only change made is that the course of bankruptcy will, as I have said before, lie in the office of the County Court Judge who administers in each county in Ireland. These are the chief provisions with respect to the equitable jurisdiction to be found in the Bill. I am very sensible that in a matter of such extreme difficulty and importance it would have been better if your Lordships had before you the exact terms in which the clauses are drawn. There is one other matter to which I must refer before I conclude, and that is the question of the remission of the rates to landlords who, from intimidation and other similar causes, do not receive the rents upon which they are rated. This relief will operate in two cases. In the first place, if a tenant is in occupation and does not pay rent, the landlord will be exempted from rates. If the land remains unoccupied in consequence of a system of intimidation which prevents the landlord from letting his land, the landlord will also be exempted from the payment of rates during the time that his land is unlet. I have only one further remark to make of a general character. It relates to the fact that

Her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty to introduce this measure into this House of Parliament. There are those who hold the opinion that this House is not qualified to legislate upon matters relating to land, especially to land in Ireland. They believe, inasmuch as most Members of this House are connected with land solely as owners, this is not a fit Assembly to deal with a measure affecting the tenure of land with regard both to owners and tenants. This view of the subject has been taken in public on a late occasion by an illustrious statesman, whose opinion on these questions ought to be of value, and whose statements I cannot allow to go uncontradicted. A few days ago, Sir William Harcourt made the following statement with regard to legislation in the House of Lords on the subject of land in Ireland. He said—

> "It was the legislation of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, so bitterly opposed by the Irish landlords, so violently opposed by the Tory Party, so mauled and mangled by the House of Lords, which was the first attempt on the part of the British Parliament to do its duty towards the country which it had undertaken to govern."

I had not the honour of a seat in your Lordships' House when the Act of 1870 was passed, but I have a clear recollection when the Act of 1881 was passed in this House; and I think I remember that the noble Lord (Lord Carlingford) who had charge of the measure during its progress in this House, and who with infinite tact, good temper, and ability, guided its fortunes through this House, bore testimony to the influence on the Bill of the discussions in the House of Lords, in direct variance with the views which have been expressed by Sir William Harcourt. My Lords, it would be presumptuous in me to enter into conflict with so eminent a statesman as Sir William Harcourt; but provided myself with a "sling and a stone," in the shape of an extract from *Hansard*, which I will venture to read to the House. After the Bill of 1881 had been read a third time in the House, and after many an anxious discussion had taken place between the Members of this House and the Members of "another place" on the subject of the provisions of the Bill, the noble (Lord Lord Carlingford) in this House made the following remarks:—

> "I have only one word to say. In our opinion, this Bill, if it passes into law in the form in which it has now come from the House of Commons, will not have sacrificed any one of the essential principles which it originally contained, or fail, so far as we and Parliament are concerned, to attain substantially the objects it has in view. I am quite willing to add that, with respect to its details, in our opinion it has been distinctly improved by the collision and comparison of opinions of the majorities of the two Houses of Parliament, looking at it, no doubt, from opposite points of view. That is our conviction, which I am glad to state to the House."—(3 *Hansard*, [265] 10.)

That is an answer to the statement of Sir William Harcourt that your Lordships are disposed to maul or mangle any measure which has for its object the settlement of the Land Question in Ireland. This Bill makes provision against a state of things which we hope further legislation before long will remove. It is, no doubt, a temporary measure, but it is temporary only in so far as it deals with matters which we believe and expect will not last for long. It is an instalment, but it must not be considered in the sense of a composition. With respect to the land in Ireland, it is, perhaps, hopeless to expect any finality; but if we are ever to reach the goal at which we are all aiming, it will be, to use the memorable words of Mr. Gladstone, by patient perseverance in well doing and by steady adherence to justice. It would be idle to deny that in passing this measure we are asking noble Lords in this House and those in whom they are deeply interested to make great and important sacrifices; but we believe they will take a larger and wider view of their own duties and responsibilities than regard to their own interests would imply, and that those interests, in the long run, will be subordinated to that which they must acknowledge to be the welfare and prosperity of the country. This measure has been drawn up with a strict regard for the rights of property; and, at the same time, with an earnest desire to meet the difficulties and remedy the defects of the laws relating to land as they at present exist. It is drawn up, as we believe, in a spirit of fairness and a spirit of justice. It is in that spirit I have endeavoured to present it to your Lordships, and I submit it with due deference but with perfect confidence to the wisdom, patriotism, and statesmanship of the House.

Bill to amend the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885; and for other purposes connected therewith—*Presented* (The Lord Privy Seal).

Earl GRANVILLE: The noble Earl who has just sat down (Earl Cadogan) has more than once in his speech made graceful apologies to your Lordships for his incompetence to deal with what we all confess to be a very difficult subject. The noble Earl may have been induced to make this apology from the fact that there has been some criticism out of doors that a Bill affecting such great and important questions should be introduced by one who has not as yet the authority of a Cabinet Minister. I am bound to say that I do not feel inclined to join in that criticism. In the first place, I have always remarked that the noble Earl when making a statement for the Government does it with great clearness, with great sympathy excited among his Friends, and absolutely without irritation to his opponents. I quite understand that the noble and learned Lord the Lord Chancellor of Ireland (Lord Ashbourne) should have felt some modesty in being the promoter of a Bill one of the principal provisions of which he condemned in such burning words not very long ago. I have no complaint to make of the account the noble Earl has given of the history of Irish land legislation. He might have gone further and have referred to the Encumbered Estates Act which was introduced with the best intentions into Ireland and failed, from its inconsistency with Irish customs. Again, it would be inconsistent for me, after my recent complaints of the same person being Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, to suggest that he should take upon himself also the duties of the Chief Secretary. What I complain of is that the noble Earl should have gone out of his way to make an attack on the evidence of the chief civil servant of Her Majesty's Government—one placed in the position he now occupies after a very distinguished man whom they thought not equal to the task. The noble Earl attacked General Buller's evidence on one point. He represented the General as having said, to the disparagement of the late Government, that all the legislation on land in Ireland had been in favour of the rich against the poor. I thought it almost impossible, because we all remember the great arguments used against the measures both of 1870 and 1881, when the argument was entirely founded on the contention that our measures were contrary to justice and political economy and injurious not to the tenant but to the landlord. In referring to the General's evidence I find that he said that until lately the legislation with regard to land in Ireland had always been in favour of the rich against the poor. This phrase, until lately, absolutely cut the ground from under the noble Lord. The noble Earl gave us an account of some of the principal points in the Report of the Commission appointed by Her Majesty's Government. The Report stated that it was impossible for a large portion of the tenants to pay even judicial rents. This was stoutly denied in the House of Commons, but it was not so stoutly denied here. Lord Salisbury only doubted the fact, and promised a remedy of a conditional character if the case was proved. The Commissioners' Report on this point is precise, and from the evidence given before them, and from the fact that bankers had limited their assistance, and from statistics from the Registrar General, show how much the prices of produce have fallen—I believe it is 18 per cent. The noble Earl has quoted several of the salient points of the Report. Some of these might, or might not, be used as arguments for some measure of repression. But I put these aside on the present occasion. Though it may be convenient to the Government to call attention to a Bill and then read it a first time, I do not think it is the most convenient course to this House, to the country, or to "another place," in regard to a Bill of this character. It may be to the promoters an advantage, because they have a perfect knowledge of the Bill, to make a statement and then adjourn without its being answered by those who are placed at a great disadvantage through having no opportunity of seeing the Bill. Another point in this Bill is the recommendation of the Commission with regard to leaseholders, and the Government adopt that recommendation with certain limitations. One of the recommendations alluded to by the noble Earl was in reference to the question of the revision of rents. The Commission strongly recommended that the term of 15 years should be limited to five years; but there is to be no revision of rents proposed by this Bill. The noble Earl quoted the speech of Lord Hartington yesterday as upsetting all the statements of fact as made by the Commission, after hearing the whole evidence and weighing and considering every word of it. I can only say that this is another instance of what Mr. Goschen says—that Lord Hartington, though not in Office, is the person who has the power. Not once, but twice, the noble Earl fortified his case with the *obiter dicta* of Lord Hartington. It is perfectly open now, after the speech of the noble Earl, for any Peer to enter into the debate. But I cannot help thinking that it would be imprudent to enter into a discussion of the Bill before we have had an opportunity of reading it. I would point out, however, that I think some explanation will be expected as to the lop-sided and one-sided character of this measure. With regard to the leaseholders, we refrained from dealing with them; but the noble Earl had given reasons for going further. The Land Commission has a comprehensive plan, whether right or wrong, for dealing with both sides of the question, and it is the proposal of Her Majesty's Government to enable the leaseholders to come into Court. It is clear that these leaseholders are in a better position than the annual tenants, for their rents will be revised according to a much lower scale than those of the annual tenants some four or five years ago, for whom no reduction is proposed. Another Land Bill is promised, and I confidently hope that some statement will be made this evening, which will give us a notion of the whole policy of Her Majesty's Government. I should like to know why the leaseholders should be put on a much better footing than the great masses of annual tenants. Some of these points must be met and explained by the Government. I must say that Her Majesty's Government have introduced a Bill in this House with singular advantage over that which we possess, because they are perfectly certain to carry whatever they propose, whereas we are in a very different position. [The Marquess of SALISBURY dissented.] The noble Marquess shakes his head, but I rather think, on the whole, that we shall find this Bill will be passed in its present shape, or in a shape perfectly agreeable to Her Majesty's Government.

EARL COWPER said, that, having presided over the Royal Commission to which reference had been made, he would give a few reasons for what he considered its principal recommendation. The noble Earl had referred to the trouble the Commissioners had experienced, and the number of times they had sat and the number of questions they had put. He certainly sympathized with those who had to wade through the whole of the evidence. That evidence, however, required very careful reading by those who wished to understand the matter, because, in a mass of evidence of that sort, it was very easy to pick out arguments for almost any conceivable course. All he could say was, that his own impression, after hearing the evidence, was that there was very great depression and very great difficulty experienced among the tenants, and particularly those who had no capital—and he was sorry to say that there was a vast number of tenants who were in that position—in paying rent in Ireland, even rents which were fair two or three years ago. The majority of the Commission, after a long and careful consideration, came to the conclusion that something really must be done to help these unfortunate tenants. Of course, they were quite aware of the difficulty, inconvenience—and some people might, perhaps, say the injustice—of departing from the arrangement that was made only six years ago. But when they considered all the arguments that were used in favour of that arrangement, which was a distinct interference with freedom of contract and with the rights of the landlord—when they considered all the reasons which induced Parliament to pass the Act of 1881, it seemed to him, at least, that every argument which was used then might be fairly used now to meet the altered state of circumstances. He could not understand anyone who was convinced by the arguments used in 1881, when the tenant was so helpless that an outside authority had to fix the rent, not feeling that if that rent turned out, by the unforeseen and continuous fall of prices, to be such as he could not pay, it would be right, however disagreeable or painful to their feelings, to step in again with some plan by which his rent would be such as he was able to pay. After turning all these things over, they thought they might depart so far from the contract that had been made as to make the rent now payable in the same proportion to produce, roughly speaking, as it was then. This would make the landlord share in the fall that had taken place, and not have it all thrown upon the tenant. At the same time, it would leave the landlord in such a position that if prices again became as they were before he might have the same rent as before; and if by any chance there was a rise of prices during a number of seasons, he might have even more rent than he had had before. In fact, he would be put in the position of receiving the same share of the proceeds of the farm that he got before. That would not be, at any rate, a very violent departure from what might justly be demanded. There might be, and there were, objections to what the Commission proposed; but he maintained that some relief ought really to be given to the tenants. He was very glad that the Government seemed to be of that opinion also. The proposals to stay evictions, and give the Judge power, if necessary, to make a reduction in the rent if he considered it too great, were certainly reliefs. These matters required to be very carefully gone into on the second reading; but, as far he could see, the plan had this fatal objection—this fatal omission — that in order to get a reduction the tenant would be obliged to force the landlord's hand and compel him to get a writ of ejectment. The tenants whom they were most anxious to help, the tenants who had done their best to meet their obligations, were in such a position that they had but few savings at their back. Yet they would have to draw upon their savings to pay. They would have no help at all, though they were the men whom they most wanted to help. He wished sincerely that something could be told their Lordships and the country as to what this purchase scheme of the Government was. The more the question of purchase was examined, the more difficult it seemed. But if it was such that it was to give any relief to the good and industrious and better sort of tenants in Ireland, the sooner they were told so the better. He thought, in honest justice, that they should have their fair share of relief. The majority of their Lordships were very anxious that the Union between England and Ireland should be preserved, and he was very much against Home Rule, as he thought it would inevitably lead to a complete rupture of the Union. The greatest hope and the greatest stay against this were these industrious and well-behaved tenants of the North. If they lost them they would have a very much more difficult battle to fight. It would be a difficult one to fight anyhow, but it would be very much more difficult if they were foolish enough to lose this well-behaved and industrious class of tenants. From what he saw in Ireland, he honestly thought that if these tenants did not get assistance they would be in as bad a position as an improvident and idle and bankrupt tenant in the South, and their loyalty would be very much shaken. For these reasons, therefore, he did hope that if there was to be any purchase and any chance of relief held out to them it would be very speedily made known. As far as he could gather from the statement of the noble Earl he really thought that they would be rather left out in the cold, while bankrupt tenants in the South might, perhaps, be relieved from some of the hardships to which they were now exposed.

The Earl of BELMORE said, he was glad to find that some change was to be made in the matter of evictions. There were several endowed schools in Ireland which were supported by estates scattered over the country. One of these schools—the Raphoe School—was in the County of Donegal, and the accounts of which now showed a debt of £900. The estate which supported it was in the same county. The tenants on that estate had not adopted the Plan of Campaign, but they had, with one exception, declined to pay any rent whatever, although the rental of the estate was at least 15 per cent below the Government valuation on the aggregate. During the last three years there had been three sales of the tenants' interest that the Board knew of—one at about 21 years' purchase, one at 45, and a third at 51 years' purchase. So it was evident that the tenants had a valuable interest in their farms. If this school had not been aided by drawing on the balances of other schools, it would have had to be closed in consequence of the non-payment of the rents which formed its endowments. With regard to leaseholders, considerable difference of opinion had prevailed, and the power to break leases, while in some cases it might be beneficial to the tenant, would, in many others operate in the contrary direction, where the tenants were holding under leases at very low rents.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN said, it was impossible to criticize a measure of so complex a character, or to form a final opinion upon it, until they had seen the Bill; but so far as he had seen from his noble Friend's (Earl Cadogan) speech, it would be of considerable benefit to the country, and it would do a great deal to render more smooth and easy the relations between landlord and tenant, which, at the present time, were so strained. The main provisions of the Bill appeared to be the admission of leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act of 1881, and the granting to the County Court Judges of certain discretionary powers which they had not hitherto possessed; and in those two main provisions of the Bill he was happy to find himself in agreement. He did the best he could in 1881 to enforce his opinion that leaseholders ought to have been admitted to the benefits of the Act of that year, and he rejoiced to find that they were now to be admitted. He did not quite clearly understand what the position of leaseholders was to be, but no doubt that would be made more clear when the Bill was presented. As to the discretion vested in the County Court Judges, he could not agree with the noble Earl opposite who presided over the Commission (Earl Cowper), that it would only apply to the case of bankrupt tenants. As he (the Earl of Dunraven) understood it, the County Court Judges would have additional powers of postponing the issue of decrees, and allowing the tenants to remain longer on their holdings. That would be an enormous benefit to the tenant, and no detriment whatever to the landlord. He was sure that owners of land would be only too glad to have any fair tribunal which would relieve them of the heavy burden of responsibility which now rested on their shoulders. They were tired of the misrepresentation and distortion to which their conduct was subjected in "another place." He could understand the justice of not levying rates on the landlord where he received no rent; but as the rates would become higher he would have to pay more out of the land that was let. So that was as broad as it was long. He was glad the Government had not shortened the term of 15 years, because he believed if they had shortened it to five the result would have been disastrous. Tenants would not have been more satisfied than they were now, and it was obvious that it would keep the country in a state of turmoil without any intermission whatever. His opinion was now, and always had been, that to attempt to fix a fair rent to the satisfaction of the parties concerned was an absolute impossibility. He thought originally it might have been better to settle the question by means of what was called a "produce rent." That was to say that a certain fixed rent should have been decided as a fair rent based on current prices, and that it should have been raised and lowered according to the changes of prices on a regular scale; but for that to have been of any use, it would have been necessary to revise the rent not every five years or every 10 years, but yearly; and that would have required great machinery, and would have been very difficult to carry out. A method such as that, though partially satisfactory, would not have been entirely satisfactory, because other factors beside the price of produce had to be considered. There was the quantity and quality of produce and the price of labour to be calculated. Tenants would not be satisfied to have rents raised if prices were high because of a scanty yield. It was absolutely impossible to decide what was fair rent; and that, he believed, was the opinion on all sides. He was rejoiced to hear the noble Earl say that Her Majesty's Government intended, in a short time, to bring in a larger measure dealing with the whole question of land by purchase. He was satisfied that in the transfer of land to the occupier, in substitution of the absurd system of dual ownership invented by Mr. Gladstone and his Party, lay the only chance of salvation for Ireland. He believed such a scheme could be carried out without calling upon Imperial aid or Imperial money—at any rate to any large extent. The late Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) had declared that such was the case; but he added that it would be impossible, unless a Parliament was set up in Dublin. That was the opinion of the late Prime Minister, the Leader of a large section of the Liberal Party, that a scheme could be worked out and fulfailed to buy out the rights of landlords in Ireland without calling upon British credit or British money; but this could be accomplished only if his former scheme was carried out. His (Lord Dunraven's) belief was that it could be carried out without the setting out a Parliament in Dublin. He sincerely hoped Her Majesty's Government would now get both time and opportunity to bring in a large and comprehensive measure dealing with that matter. He did not know that it was material to discuss the opinion of Sir Redvers Buller as to whether the law in Ireland was in favour of the rich or the poor; but he would remind the noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) that General Buller was comparing the condition of the country at a time when there was practically no law with its condition "but a short time ago," when, in his opinion, "what law there was was really on the side of the rich." Mr. Gladstone, speaking in 1881, declared the law in Ireland was much more in favour of the tenant than the law in England. That obviously related to the Land Act of 1870. General Buller could not possibly have referred to a state of things prior to 1870—that is, 16 years ago—when he alluded to the law being in favour of the rich "a short time ago." He was certainly referring to the same laws which Mr. Gladstone had declared to be so favourable to the tenants—that is, to the poor. He believed this measure would be a salutary one, and of great service; and he believed that noble Lords opposite on the Front Bench would be obliged to admit that it did not fairly come within the category of agrarian laws of the 19th century, prominent among which were the Land Acts of 1881 and 1870, which were described the other day by Mr. John Morley as laws which had caused more woe to the people of Ireland than all the penal laws of the 18th century.

Bill read 1ª. (No. 58.)

Earl CADOGAN said, he proposed to take the second reading of the Bill on Thursday, the 21st of April.

LAND TRANSFER BILL.

BILL PRESENTED. FIRST READING.

The LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord Halsbury): My Lords, the subject to which I have to call attention is one of very great importance, and has for considerably more than a quarter of a century occupied the attention of those who were best qualified to consider and to deal with it. I should feel great diffidence in speaking to your Lordships on the subject if I thought the previous legislation with regard to it had been so complete a failure as it is sometimes said to be. But I do not think it is accurate to describe the previous measures as failures. I believe it would be more true to say that they were steps in advance, enabling us to accomplish what they undoubtedly failed to accomplish. It had been my intention more than a year ago to introduce a Bill on this subject, and for that purpose I obtained from your Lordships' House a Bill, which afterwards became law, to suspend the operations of the Land Registry in London; so that in the event of your Lordships passing legislation on the subject of land registration, the Registry might be made part of my scheme. The Bill which I have to present to your Lordships now proposes to deal in two ways with what have been found to be defects in the existing system, or which, at all events, were matters which it was not thought desirable to deal with on previous occasions. Public opinion was not then ripe on the subject; but attention has since been directed to it in various ways. I find that since I gave Notice of my Bill at the beginning of last year a great variety of schemes have been under discussion. There has been an interesting series of letters in *The Times*, and several books relating to the subject have appeared. I mention these various publications and proposals for this reason. I have had the pleasure of reading them; but I cannot say that I agree with them all, because they do not agree with one another. Nevertheless I find in all of them considerable support for the proposals which it was my intention to make a year ago. There are several matters which I cannot doubt will be subjects of debate when the second reading of the present Bill is moved; but I believe that, instead of defending point by point the proposals I have to make, it will be better for me now to state in broad outlines the nature of the scheme. The first proposal is, that there shall be a Land Registry, and that that Land Registry shall not be something in the nature of a legal office in London, but shall be a Board consisting of persons experienced both in conveyancing and in organization and administration. It is to be constituted in London, and what I particularly wish to point out is, that the scheme is intended to be capable of greater expansion. The great difficulties in the way of establishing a system of registration hitherto, have been the magnitude of the operations contemplated and the necessity of applying the system all over the Kingdom. My proposal is, that branch offices shall be established from time to time, and that the work shall be done gradually. As soon as an Order in Council says that a registration district shall be established, certain consequences will follow which I will now proceed to describe. The Act of 1875, although I do not admit it has been a failure in the sense in which some people describe it, undoubtedly did not fulfil the expectations of its authors in causing land to be registered to the extent that was anticipated. One chief reason for this was that the registration was voluntary. It is not true to say that compulsory registration would be an interference with the liberty of the subject. It would be just as true to say that the Statute of Frauds or any other statute regulating the validity of certain contracts was an interference with the liberty of the subject. The compulsion which I propose is that upon the next transfer of land—the next time the owner of land proposes to give a legal interest to his transferee—it must be brought upon the register. When I first proposed that a system of registration should exist I felt very much pressed by the question as to what was to be registered, and whether it was possible to give a title which should include the boundaries. On that question my views have been considerably modified by what I have learnt since. I have heard with great surprise that there exists at the present moment a register in which every yard of land in this country has been registered by a tribunal which has worked noiselessly and inexpensively. The Land Tax Commissioners have a register of every yard of land in this country, and it has been formed with a degree of accuracy and precision that to me is absolutely astonishing. The Commissioners have from time to time without remuneration, without expense to anybody, been constantly exercising jurisdiction, and deciding questions of adjoining boundaries. That system exists in every county of England. I think there are 380 land tax districts in England in which that system exists. Under the Act of 1875 there are two or three different things which may be registered. I do not think anyone would recommend the registration of assurances as distinguished from registration of title. Under Lord Cairns' Act a person can register either an absolute or qualified title, and that Act, it appeared to me, afforded the materials on which a registration of title might be founded. It appeared to me that in the present state of the world's history, and with the present spread of knowledge and the mode of telling people what was being done, it was possible to avail one's self of it and to make a possessory title in a comparatively short period become an indefeasible title. The proposal I have to make is this, that when a person shall have given such notices as the Land Board shall prescribe—by advertisement or otherwise—that person shall after a period of five years be able to apply to the Land Board for a certificate of indefeasible title. My Lords, that is the nature of the proposal. It seems to me that the same operations might or might not, at the option of the person desiring his title to be registered, apply to boundaries. The boundaries might also be so registered as to obtain an absolutely indefeasible title for them at the end of the five years. My Lords, as your Lordships are aware, the Act of 1875 was in some respects imperfect from the state of the law at that time; but the Conveyancing Act and the Settled Land Act have altered that state of the law, and have facilitated a measure for the general registration of land. I cannot expect or hope that the subject which I am about to introduce to your Lordships' notice should pass without debate. On the contrary, in the discussion which may take place on the second reading and in Committee, I look to your Lordships for the assistance which will enable a measure to be perfected, which, if it can be perfected, undoubtedly is for the advantage of all. My Lords, I should say, in the first place, that, leaving absolutely untouched the power of settlement and will, I propose to make the devolution of real property the same as if it be personalty, and to introduce a real representative. In the first place, the executor would be made the real representative, independently of any question of intestacy. As to the subject of estates tail there will be two proposals in the Bill. First, in respect to existing estates tail, I propose that wherever a person of full age has power without the consent of anyone else to enlarge his estate tail by deed duly enrolled, then the law shall do it for him. I propose next that estates tail should not be created in future, and that the Statute which is known as "The Statute of Westminster the Second" should be repealed. My Lords, that of course may be a serious subject of debate; but I believe that some such alteration will be found necessary in order to render the other provisions of the Bill possible or reasonable. I believe it will be found to the advantage of the owners of property that all property should be subject to the same legal incidents, and that if there is to be an attack upon property it will be resisted with much greater force, if it be possible to say that it includes all property and not merely property which has any peculiar privilege, because then it can be said that an attack on property is an attack on property of all kinds. My Lords, the other proposals in the Bill are comparatively immaterial, inasmuch as they merely provide the machinery ancillary to the main provisions. One provision is founded on the analogy of the plan adopted in some of the Australian Colonies, and it is in the nature of an insurance fund. This can be done without any considerable expense to the State or to those who desire to transfer their land. The effect of it will be to make the working of the Bill much more easy, and the experience of the Australian Colonies shows that so small a sum as a halfpenny or even a farthing in the pound will be found amply sufficient to provide a fund for all such contingencies that may arise from fraud or otherwise in relation to land register. I will leave the Bills in your Lordships' hands, hoping I may receive the assistance of my noble and learned Friends, and hoping that we shall be able to do that which we all desire—to cheapen and facilitate the transfer of land. At the present time the holders of land are are much less disposed to continue to hold it than in former times. It would be a wise and prudent course to facilitate any system by which land can—with advantage to both vendor and vendee—be distributed, and I therefore implore your Lordships' co-operation in the Bill which I now propose to the House.

Bill to further simplify titles, and facilitate the transfer of land in England —*Presented* (The LORD CHANCELLOR.)

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, that, although that was not the stage for a discussion of the Bill, he would venture to say at once that it was a very large and important measure. There were two points on which he had heard the noble and learned Lord (Lord Halsbury) with great pleasure, because in his (Lord Selborne's) own contribution to the working out of that great problem, he certainly arrived distinctly at those two conclusions. The first was, that if they wanted to do anything in that matter, they must determine to make the measure compulsory, provided always the country was willing to pay for the necessary machinery. It was idle, as long as it was left optional, to talk about general registration or real simplification of title. The second point was, that he proposed to take a short period of time within which, by the process of the registry, and after all proper notices, a possessory title could be converted into an absolute title. He had always thought that any measure of registration which did not tend, within reasonable limits of time, to the clearance of title would fail to accomplish the object of greatly cheapening the expense of transfer. It was not possible, without a general examination into all the titles of the Kingdom, to clear them at once. But it was possible to say that, after a limited time and with proper precautions, the title might, by proper authority, be declared absolute. It did not alarm him in the least that his noble and learned Friend should turn estates tail for the future into fee-simple estates, for it was only applying to real estate the same rule which was now applicable to personalty. Notwithstanding that rule, no difficulty had been found in making reasonable settlements of personalty; and, although they could have no entails, he did not think there would be any any such difficulty as to land. He owned that if his noble and learned Friend had prohibited all settlements it would have been a different matter, because it would have made it necessary for every provision for members of a family out of land to take the form of charge or mortgage, which anyone who was conversant with the subject would know might be an alteration for the worse. There was one other matter—the Law of Descent. Public opinion in this country had long since been in favour of some alteration. Without any hostility to the principle of primogeniture, he had no hesitation in saying that if an alteration were made in the present law, it must be in the direction proposed. But he hoped that part of the Bill which related to a real representative would be found to be very carefully framed; because he could not think it possible to vest enormous landed estates in persons having only a fiduciary character, and no beneficial interest, under obligations similar to those which now attached to executors, without obstructing for a considerable time the proper discharge of the duties attaching to landed property, and preventing the acceptance of such trusts by those who might be the fittest persons to undertake them, especially in the present state of the market for land.

LORD HERSCHELL said, that he had listened with great interest to the statement of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack (Lord Halsbury), and would give him every assistance in his power in dealing with this important and difficult subject. He rose, not for the purpose of criticizing the statement, but to ask for an explanation on one or two points. He understood the noble and learned Lord to state that, after a title had been registered for a certain number of years, it became indefeasible. Of course, the matter would require great care if the real owner was to be precluded after five years from claiming the estate unless he was to be given some kind of notice. He did not quite understand, if an indefeasible title was to be given to the person who had been on the register for five years, what was the use of the insurance fund. If he bought a piece of land and took a title on the register, and it should afterwards turn out that the person who conveyed to him had no real title, would he get an absolute title; or would he get compensation out of the insurance fund and the real owner get the title to the land; or did his noble and learned Friend propose that the process should be reversed? The Australian system was that if a person purchased a piece of land and was placed on the register, and it turned out that the vendor had no real title, the purchaser obtained no absolute title, but compensation out of the insurance fund. The real owner got the title to the land. His noble and learned Friend seemed to reverse that system, and proposed that the person last on the register should hold the land, and the real owner should have compensation out of the insurance fund. It was very questionable whether the Australian system was not better. He entirely approved his noble and learned Friend's proposal, that realty should descend in the same way as personalty, and it was very important to carry out that principle, as it was one for which many had long contended. It was quite true that anyone could make a will dealing with land of which he was owner as the law now stood; but it was also true that many persons did not make wills; and, as a Law Officer, he had been very much struck with the many cases in which property escheats to the Crown for want of a will in case of illegitimacy, showing that intestacy was common. He had known extremely hard cases under the existing law, and he rejoiced that the Lord Chancellor proposed to make this change. In one case he was acquainted with a labouring man had invested almost his entire savings in land, and died suddenly without leaving a will. The result was that a distribution of his property took place which inflicted very great hardship upon some of his family, the distribution being in a manner which it was quite certain the man himself would never have dreamt of making. He would like to know who was to be registered. Was it intended to register a settlement of life estate, showing the different persons having title, or only to register the person or persons owning the fee? With regard to the cost of registration, he was persuaded that unless it was made simple and cheap to place a title on the register registration would not take place, and people would trust to getting equitable titles. It was essential to remember that this proposal was not made for the benefit of existing landowners; but because it was believed that, in the public interest, there should be a simple means of passing land from one person to another. Previous attempts at registration had failed, because registration was made so expensive that no inducement was given to register. They must now endeavour to reverse that process by making registration as cheap as possible. The Lord Chancellor stated that power was reserved in the Bill, in the event of any person having been deprived of land to which he was entitled, to enable the Court to order compensation out of the insurance fund or the restoration of the land. The legal owner was always to be the person registered. It was not every person who had been on the register for five years who could at the end of that time ask for an indefeasible title, but only those who had complied with the provisions which the Land Board would enforce. The Bill was supplemented to, and would be incorporated with, the Act of 1875, in which there were a variety of provisions under which any person who had a right to come on the register might, by his *caveat*, have a case submitted to the High Court of Justice, whose decision would be final.

Lord HALSBURY said, that with reference to the point his noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) had referred to, power was reserved by the Bill, in the events mentioned, to the Court empowered to deal with the matter either to order the real owner of the land to receive compensation out of the insurance fund, or to order the land to be restored to him. With respect to the person who was to be registered, he might say that it was to be the legal owner who was always to be on the register. Under the Settled Land Act, the tenant for life had power to dispose of the estate, the purchase-money being paid to trustees for the benefit of those entitled. Registration, therefore, would make provision for those circumstances. All tenants for life would be entered on the register, so that the whole condition of an estate would be seen by looking at the register. With reference to the period of five years required for obtaining an indefeasible title, the provisions of the Bill were of this character. It was not every person who had been on the register for five years who could, at the end of that time, come and ask for an indefeasible title. The proposal of the Bill was that any person who at any time was on the register should be able to propose to the Land Registrar that he should accept a possessory title as the commencement of the five years necessary for an indefeasible title. Proper persons were then intrusted with the duty of making inquiry; and, in the event of that being satisfactory, at the end of five years an order was made conferring the title as indefeasible on compliance with the various provisions that it had been thought expedient to impose on the applicant. The Bill was ancillary to, and would form part of, the Act of 1875.

Bill read 1^{a}. (No. 57.)

SHERIFFS (CONSOLIDATION) BILL.

(The Lord Chancellor.)

(NO. 50.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that its object was to consolidate all the Statutes relating to this subject, the first of which had been passed in the reign of Edward I., and the last in the 44th of Her Majesty's. The title of the various Acts which it was proposed to consolidate occupied six pages, and any persons who desired to make themselves acquainted with the laws relating to Sheriffs had to read all those Acts. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^{a}."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, that it was a great hardship which was imposed now-a-days upon country gentlemen that they should have to serve as Sheriffs, and when the Bill got into Committee he should bring forward a proposal that would have the effect of relieving them from some portion of their present onerous duties.

LORD HALSBURY said, that this was purely a consolidation measure, which depended, as to its object, upon being passed rapidly, and if there were any opposition of any kind to it, it must necessarily be withdrawn.

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House *To-morrow.*

ITALY AND THE GERMAN POWERS—RUMOURED ALLIANCE.

OBSERVATIONS. QUESTION.

LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL: I rise to put the Question of which I have given Notice to Her Majesty's Government. It is not at all my wish to address the House at length on foreign policy, for which this would not be a proper season. It would be too long even to enumerate the journals in which the statement I refer to has been mentioned, and which comprise the best known in Great Britain and in Europe. *The Standard* of March 16 and of to-day might be particularly specified, as the Government are not, perhaps, inclined to disregard that organ. The alleged union of Italy with the German Powers might be fertile of results which it would become diplomatists to meditate. Among others, it would seem calculated to retard the foreign occupation of Bulgaria, from which endless inconveniences are justly apprehended. It would tend to guarantee tranquillity upon the Continent during the year which we have entered. It is, therefore, most important to the financial, the political, and military world, that an official statement should be heard upon the subject. Nothing unusual or unprecedented is required. In 1879 we were informed by the Government of that time that Austria and Germany had formed a new and, as it was thought, a satisfactory relation, although this country had not entered into it. The announcement came not only from the Government, but from the noble Marquess who now directs the Foreign Office. Supposing the alliance formed, it would be, no doubt, desirable to know what Powers were likely to accede to it, and in what manner it would bear upon the difficulties the Eastern Question has presented since the autumn of 1885. But it would not be prudent to approach the Government with too much interrogation. Whatever falls from them will be heard with curiosity in this House, and even far beyond its limits. The noble Lord then asked, Whether the repeated statement of an alliance between Italy and the German Powers was well founded?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): I suppose my noble Friend, when he asks, "Whether the repeated statement of an alliance between Italy and the German Powers is well founded," means to ask, whether any Treaty has been signed between Italy and the German Powers? An alliance is so vague and general a phrase that I do not feel that it would be possible, under any circumstances, to give any answer. However, even if I could persuade my noble Friend to put his Question in a more accurate form, it would not be possible for me to gratify his wish, for I cannot give information which I do not myself possess. I am wholly unaware whether any Treaty has been signed between Italy and the German Powers. We have received no information upon the subject, and I do not know whether any information can be obtained.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (TRANSFER OF REGISTRY, &c.) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts by making better provision for the registry of British ships; and for other purposes—Was *presented* by The Lord Stanley of Preston; read 1ª (No. 59.)

House adjourned at half-past Seven o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 31st March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Third Reading*—Kensington Vestry, *put off.*

PUBLIC BILLS—*Leave*—Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [*Fourth Night*], *debate further adjourned.*

Ordered — First Reading — Municipal Elections (Scotland) (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) * [215].

Report of Select Committee—Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) [No. 91].

Committee—Report—Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension * [171-214].

Withdrawn—City of London Fire Inquests * [165].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

BELFAST MAIN DRAINAGE BILL

(*by Order*).

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS AMENDMENTS.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Consideration of Lords Amendments [29th March].

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I object to the third reading of this Bill.

The JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL (Mr. Marriott) (Brighton): As there is likely to be some discussion upon this Bill, and as the Public Business which will come before the House this evening is of a very important nature, I wish to make an appeal to the hon. Member to allow the discussion to be postponed until a more convenient day.

Mr. SEXTON: As the right hon. and learned Gentleman has appealed to me, I may say that I quite conceive that a prolonged discussion upon this Bill to-day would be inconvenient; and, therefore, I have no objection to the further adjournment of the debate.

Mr. EWART (Belfast, N.): I, also, concur with the propriety of the request which has been made to the hon. Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: To what day is it proposed that the debate shall be adjourned?

Mr. SEXTON: Until this day week.

Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday* next.

KENSINGTON VESTRY BILL [*Lords*] (*by Order*).

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time"—(*Sir Charles Forster*.)

Sir ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I rise to move, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read a third time on this day six months, and I do so with the greatest confidence that this House will not refuse to listen to the bitter cry of the large and dense population in my constituency, who are absolutely unanimous in objecting to this measure. And when I speak of the objection of my constituents, I can assure the House, from personal knowledge, that that term is altogether inadequate to describe the local feeling which exists throughout North Kensington. That feeling is one of absolute terror and panic, and in a very few words—because I fully appreciate the importance of the Public Business which will follow this discussion—I will endeavour to justify that feeling on the part of my constituents to the House. The first thing I would ask the House is, why should Parliament force on an unwilling people that for which no one is particularly anxious now, and that which the persons who are affected by it absolutely loathe and detest? It is admitted by the promoters that those in favour of the Bill in the Kensington Vestry have, by the recent elections—at any rate, as far as regards the representation of North Kensington—dwindled almost to the vanishing point. Those who still persistently cry out for the passing of this Bill are mainly resident in South Kensington, far away from the site where it is proposed to erect the refuse destructor under this Bill. An obvious answer to those gentlemen who seem to think that the erection of this destructor will be such a delightful and agreeable thing is, why do they not keep it themselves, instead of bringing it to North Kensington? It is asserted in a statement of facts which was put into my hands as I entered the House, bearing the name of the solicitors to the Vestry, that the Bill was a permissive Bill. Well, Sir, technically speaking, I suppose it is a permissive Bill; but, practically, it is not a permissive Bill. If the Bill passes the Vestry of Kensington will, I believe, be legally bound, and if not legally they will certainly be morally bound, to incur a very large expenditure, probably, at least, to the extent of purchasing the land on which this destructor is to be built. There is, however, this peculiarity about the constitution of the Kensington Vestry—namely, that it consists of only 48 members from North Kensington, while there are 72 members who are returned from South Kensington. This is not because North Kensington is not equal in population; but because North Kensington is not equal in wealth and rateable value to South Kensington, to which, for parochial purposes, it is tied up. Now, Sir, if this great expenditure is incurred under the Bill, I will put it to hon. Members of this House, most of whom are probably familiar with the working of Local Bodies of this sort, would it be possible for Vestrymen representing South Kensington, who form the vast majority of the Kensington Vestry, to go back to their constituency and to propose that, although the land has been bought and this enormous expenditure has been incurred, yet the intentions of the Bill itself, as permitted and sanctioned by this House, should be neglected and thrown aside? My own opinion is that it would be impossible for them to go to their constituency with such a story as that; and, therefore, I ask the House to believe that this Bill is in no way whatever a permissive Bill. It is quite true that it would have been made a permissive Bill if the Amendment suggested by the hon. and learned Member for the Barnstaple Division of Devonshire (Mr. Pitt-Lewis) had been carried when the measure was last under discussion; and I believe that that was the consideration which was dwelt upon by the hon. Member for the Bodmin Division of Cornwall (Mr. Courtney), and by many other Members, in the debate which took place on that occasion—namely, the consideration that that Amendment had been accepted by the promoters, and that the fact would influence many Members in declining to vote for the rejection of the Bill. But when the Amendment was actually proposed by the hon. and learned Member for Barnstaple it will be remembered by the House that the great authority of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was adduced to show that the Amendment itself was in principle un-Constitutional. Of course, the Amendment, after such a statement as that, was rejected by the House without a Division, and this fact, I think, ought to embolden those hon. Members who are opposed to the Bill to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and those who voted with him the other day, to reconsider their attitude with regard to the Bill itself. There is another consideration which very likely influenced hon. Members in the opinion they formed with regard to the Bill, and that is a sort of vague idea that the scientific evidence adduced before the Select Committee had proved distinctly that a destructor was a very excellent mode of getting rid of the refuse and offal of populous neighbourhoods. We do not dispute that for a moment. We never have disputed the scientific evidence. We admit that if a destructor can be so well managed that there will never be any negligence on the part of those employed in the work of cremation, that there will be no break down in the machinery, and that nothing will happen to impede the regular course of the destructor—under such circumstances we admit that it is possible a destructor might be rendered, to some extent, innocuous. But, at the same time, we cannot help remembering the old axiom that one ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory in a case like this. Hon. Members who supported the Bill relied very widely on the experience which had been derived from the Whitechapel destructor. One hon. Gentleman, the Member for South Kensington (Sir Algernon Borthwick), told us that he had visited Whitechapel in order to inspect the destructor, and that he had hardly been able to find it, so innocent an erection was it. Now, I hold in my hand a report of a meeting this month of the Whitechapel District Board of Works, and in that report I find a letter from a well-known clergyman in the East End of London—the Rev. S. A. Barnett, the Vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel—and I will ask the permission of the House to read one or two lines from that letter. Before I do so, however, let me ask the House to remember that it was an admitted fact that the Kensington destructor was to be erected close to a place where there are several very large schools, attended by no less than 6,000 children. Another fact, also admitted, is that the staple industry of the locality in which it is proposed to put up this destructor, in North Kensington, is the laundry industry, which, at any rate, requires a certain amount of reputation in connection with cleanliness and health. After that premise I will read a short extract from the letter of the Vicar of St. Jude's about the Whitechapel destructor, the operation of which has been so much relied upon by those who are in favour of the Bill. He says—

> "Dear Sir,—When the destructor was started in this neighbourhood, I refused to take any part in opposing your plan, holding it to be my duty to support you in a reform. . . . Now, however, after some months' experience, I do make a formal complaint, that the chimney deposits a large amount of light, partially-consumed paper-ash. This falls so thickly as to cover the ground, and in one case to stop a gutter. Such accumulation of dirt is bad for us who are able to use water and employ service; it is much worse for the poor in the neighbourhood, whose health and wealth are alike affected."

Now, I put it to the House if it is reasonable that such a state of affairs as this, which is acknowledged to exist in the case of the destructor which has been put forward as a typical destructor, and which has been relied upon in support of the Bill—I put it to the House whether it is reasonable to suppose that such a state of affairs as is described in this letter is calculated to improve or to injure the trade of those employed in the laundries, to improve or to injure the health of the children who may have to play about under the shadow of this chimney? I will ask the House to consider this one fact. Granting that all the scientific merits of the destructor have been fairly stated; granting that it produces no nuisance whatever, still I venture to maintain that it cannot be denied by anyone —call it prejudice, or whatever you like — that very few fathers and mothers of families would not refuse to send their children's clothes to be washed next door to a destructor of this kind. For the same sum of money they can send their clothes to South Kensington, or West Islington, or any other locality in which laundries are to be found. It seems to me perfectly inhuman to make scientific experiments like this in a locality where the poor people who inhabit it have mainly to depend upon this laundry industry. It has been stated that the erection of the destructor will be a saving of something like £3,000 a-year to the ratepayers, and gradually the saving has been worked up to something like £6,000 a-year. I would ask the House to remember that these figures come from an entirely *ex parte* statement, which has never yet been verified by the Kensington Vestry, or by any other responsible authority. I would, therefore, ask the House to receive the figures with, at any rate, a certain amount of doubt. They are figures which are not borne out by the expenditure incurred in this very Whitechapel destructor of which so much has been said on the other side, because I find that at the very meeting at which Mr. Barnett's letter was read there was also read a Report from the Surveyor, in which he states that there have been repairs and alterations required in connection with the Whitechapel destructor, and therefore that the saving originally anticipated is not borne out by the actual facts of the case. Indeed, it would appear that any saving at all is very problematical in our case, where the ratepayers of North Kensington are asked to sink a large amount of capital in the purchase of land and the setting up of bricks and mortar in the erection of furnaces and a large chimney. But will anyone hold for a moment that the question of the disposal of the refuse and offal of London is absolutely settled at this moment in favour of destructors? Why, Sir, we Metropolitan Members, at any rate, know that at any moment a scheme may be devised for the utilization of all this refuse; and directly such a scheme is brought forward, at that very moment the whole of this large capital which the ratepayers of Kensington are to be forced to expend against their wishes will be lost. For these reasons I implore the House to listen to what the ratepayers of Kensington urge in their own behalf. And, in conclusion, I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time on this day six months.

Major General GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months." — (*Sir Roper Lethbridge.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) : I have listened to what my hon. Friend has said in regard to the injury the erection of this destructor is likely to inflict upon the poorer inhabitants of North Kensington. A similar statement was made on the last occasion when the Bill was under discussion. Now, I sympathize as strongly as anybody with the poorer inhabitants of the Metropolis; but I am bound to say that, having presided over the Committee appointed by the House to inquire into the merits of the Bill, I do not think there is the smallest shadow of foundation for the fears which have been expressed. I should certainly be the last person in the world to force upon a locality an erection of this kind against the wishes of the inhabitants if I believed that it could, by possibility, injure either their health or industrial pursuits. But as to the merits of the Bill, neither I nor any other Member of the Committee ever entertained the smallest doubt, and I am still of opinion, that if this destructor is put up no injury will ensue to the inhabitants, but that, on the contrary, great advantage will be conferred upon them. The Committee believed that this was the best, the cheapest, and the most satisfactory way of accomplishing the object desired; and, having heard all the evidence and carefully considered it, we arrived at the conclusion that the site selected is the best site upon which this erection could be placed. My hon. Friend has referred to the destructor at Whitechapel, and he spoke of it as a typical example of destructors in general, and the example which is going to be followed in the case of Kensington. He then went on to contend that the destructor at Whitechapel has altogether proved a failure, and to urge its failure as a reason why the House should reject the present Bill. Now, the Committee had a great deal of evidence in regard to the Whitechapel destructor, and I wish to point out that the two cases were not at all identical. Conclusive reasons were given to the Committee to account for the failure in Whitechapel, and one was that there was no catch. In this Bill a special provision has been inserted to supply that omission. I will only add that, having made the Bill a subject of careful and prolonged consideration, and having come to the conclusion that the provisions contained in it are satisfactory, I think it is only reasonable on my part that I should ask the House on this occasion to support the decision unanimously arrived at by the Committee.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not propose for a moment to enter into the merits of this destructor. It is obvious that that must be a matter which can only be decided by a Committee. The Committee over which the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolshire (Mr. Chaplin) presided no doubt inquired into the matter. They formed their conclusions according to the evidence submitted to them; but that, Sir, is not the point. The point is this. This Bill was promoted by the Kensington Vestry; but the Kensington Vestry have themselves, on further consideration, turned against the Bill. Now, in 1886—on the 14th of July—the Kensington Vestry passed a Resolution against the Bill. The only reason why the Bill was not withdrawn in consequence was that in a Vestry, when a Resolution has been passed, it is necessary to have the assent of a two-thirds majority in order that such a Resolution may be rescinded. On the previous occasion, when the Bill was brought up from the Committee, and I moved that it should not be accepted, I presented a Petition from 55 members of the Kensington Vestry. The Kensington Vestry consists of 112 members, of whom eight are official members. Probaby hon. Members will say that 55 is not one-half of 112; but, as a matter of fact, a good many of the Vestry were not able to sign the Petition, and, practically, the 55 who did sign it represented the majority of the Vestry. At the time the hon. and learned Member for the Barnstaple Division of Devonshire (Mr. Pitt-Lewis), who was also a member of the Vestry, was desirous of moving the insertion of a new clause in the Bill, which would really have had the effect of settling the measure. It was because some of the Vestry were of opinion that if the Bill was to be killed it had better be killed in that manner than by the open rejection of the House that the Bill is now before us. It would otherwise have been thrown out on my Motion. All parties, however, are now pretty much agreed, and I have very little doubt that the Bill will be thrown out to-day. So little doubt have I, indeed, that I would suggest to the right hon. Member opposite (Mr. Chaplin), whom I believe to be one of the strongest opponents of obstruction in this House, that, having in view the important Business which is to follow, he should not put the House to the trouble of a Division.

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): If the Amendment proposed by the hon. and learned Member for the Barnstaple Division of Devonshire (Mr. Pitt-Lewis) had not been rejected by the House, those who, like myself, are opposed to the erection of this destructor would not have felt it necessary to occupy the attention of the House in asking it to review the decision which has already been arrived at. It has been by no means settled as yet what the best mode of dealing with town refuse may be—whether the mode suggested in this House, or some other. I would venture to call the attention of the House to the case of a large and important parish in London—the parish of St. Mary's, Newington—one Division of which I have the honour to represent. The whole of the refuse of that parish, so far from being destroyed, is dealt with and sent into the country, where it becomes an article largely sought for by farmers. The parish authorities, by the mode in which they deal with this refuse, have been able not only to defray the cost of collection, but to effect a considerable saving to the ratepayers. That being so, I say emphatically that, in regard to this question, the parish of Kensington is decidedly in the wrong, and that it would be impolitic to erect this destructor. Why not consent to treat the dirt and refuse of Kensington in the same way as the dirt and refuse of St. Mary's, Newington, have been treated? In St. Mary's, Newington, it is sent into Kent down the River Medway; and if the stable and road refuse of London were collected and sent to the agricultural parts of the Kingdom, so far from it being necessary to destroy such refuse, I am satisfied that it would be eagerly sought after, and become not only an economical but a paying mode of dealing with the matter. Then, again, the parish of Kensington is admirably situated for carrying on operations of that kind. It has water communication with the Thames, a canal runs through it, and it also has the advantage of an extensive system of railways, by means of which the whole of this refuse may be conveyed into the country. Therefore, I would ask the House not to allow material of this nature, which is so valuable when properly treated, to be put into a destructor and lost to the ratepayers of the parish. I also object to the Bill because, as I said on the last occasion, the site selected for the erection of the destructor is eminently unsuited for the purpose, and I cannot help saying that the Kensington Vestry seem to be animated by a selfish motive in the selection of this site. The Kensington people, not content with destroying the refuse in their own parish, have selected a spot for carrying on the work of destruction which is situate on the confines of the borough of Hammersmith, and I ask the House not to inflict so grievous an injury upon another parish as would be involved in the erection of this destructor. In common justice to Hammersmith, the inhabitants of that district ought to be relieved from the prospect of being subjected to such a nuisance. We have heard something about no scientific evidence having been adduced on the part of those who object to this Bill. Surely it is an insult to the poor people whose interests are at stake to ask them why they have not been able to find the money that would have been necessary to oppose the Bill. If the promoters had selected some other site—if they proposed to erect this destructor in Kensington Palace Gardens, where the land lying between the houses and the Park is open, I have no doubt that we should have had many hon. and right hon. Members who would have found sufficient expert evidence against the measure. If an attempt had been made to place the destructor on Campden Hill, which, considering that it is the highest point in the district, would have been the most suitable site, we should have had the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England (Sir Richard Webster) and the hon. and learned Member for the Barnstaple Division of Devonshire (Mr. Pitt-Lewis) ready to give evidence in favour of the rejection of the scheme. I trust that, considering all the facts of the case, the House will be prepared to say that the inhabitants of Kensington, and especially of the adjacent borough of Hammersmith, are not to be afflicted with the grievous nuisance proposed to be created by the Bill.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I believe the difficulty the Committee had to contend with in considering the case of the opponents of the Bill was not so much the scientific evidence which was produced as the fact that no scientific evidence whatever was forthcoming. Now, it appears to me that this is the very best method of dealing with the refuse of large towns. In all the large towns of the North of England this process is adopted and satisfactorily carried out, and if the arrangements are complete and proper, I do not see how there can be any difficulty in dealing with the matter. I would remind the House that the merits of the Bill have been fully investigated by a Committee upstairs. Therefore, I trust that the House will support the Bill, and I shall certainly give my own vote in favour of the third reading.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not profess to know anything about destructors; but I know what the requirements of the parish of Kensington are, and I have seen the ground upon which it is proposed to place this erection. Now, so far as it is proposed to devote a part of that ground to purposes of recreation, I think it is impossible to find ground better suited for the purpose. It possesses a considerable variation of level, and could without much difficulty be converted into ornamental gardens. I would, therefore, suggest to the House that as the Bill has gone so far, having already passed through Committees of the two Houses of Parliament, and seeing that we have been told, on the highest authority, that it is a permissive Bill, we should now allow it to pass, so that the Kensington Vestry may be able, hereafter, to decide upon purchasing the land. I think they would do well to buy it, and, having bought it, then to come to a conclusion whether it should be devoted altogether to the purposes of recreation, or whether part of it should be utilized for the erection of a destructor, and the other part devoted to purposes of recreation. I confess myself that I should not raise any objection if the conclusion arrived at were to devote the whole of it to purposes of recreation. My only point is that we should give the Kensington Vestry the opportunity of obtaining possession of the land, and then leave them to settle among themselves how they would utilize it.

SIR EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): The main reason which has been assigned by hon. Members for refusing to adopt the Report of the Committee is that the Kensington Vestry is not now in favour of erecting this destructor. Now, I may say that the Kensington Vestry have already on four occasions, whatever their present opinion may be, decided in favour of putting up a dust destructor, and it is not improbable that they may so decide again. If this Bill is thrown out, the Vestry will be put to the trouble on a future occasion of promoting a fresh Bill, and of incurring a very considerable amount of expense, which the passing of this Bill will render unnecessary. The whole case was fully gone into before the Committee, who considered various plans for getting rid of town refuse. It was proved that the destructor would reduce the refuse to one-sixth of its bulk, and having been reduced to ashes the refuse itself, instead of being dangerous to health, would become perfectly innocuous. It was also proved that the site at South Kensington is the most satisfactory site for the erection of a dust destructor that can be selected, and it was further shown that there would be a positive saving to the parish in collecting and disposing of its refuse in this way. If the destructor is not erected, the refuse cannot be disposed of by sale, but must be carted away and placed on open spaces where it must necessarily become dangerous to the health of the surrounding population. In addition to that evil I may remind the House that the open spaces which now exist in the Metropolis are every year being built upon, and any houses built near such deposits of refuse will be most unhealthy. It was upon these grounds the Committee considered that the erection of a dust destructor would be the most satisfactory way of getting rid of this refuse, and they inserted a provision in the Bill to insure that it should be properly managed. I therefore appeal to the House to support the decision of their Committee and consent to the third reading of the Bill.

MR. PITT-LEWIS (Devon, Barnstaple): As I moved last week an Amendment which was rejected by the House, I wish to say that although I have not the honour to be a member of the Kensington Vestry I am a resident in that parish, and have taken great interest in this question. I may say at once that I intend to vote against the third reading of the Bill. No doubt, if it were possible to insure that the site should be converted into a recreation ground if the Bill is passed, that would be a desirable object, and the object I had in view in proposing my Amendment was to obtain the land for purposes of recreation. But what happened? I proposed the insertion of a clause in order to prevent the inhabitants of the parish from being again surprised. I am certainly not satisfied, if the Bill passes as it stands, that the inhabitants may not at some future period be surprised into the erection of this destructor. There is only one point more that I desire to call attention to. I am reminded that even in regard to this House a Committee was appointed last year to inquire into the unsavoury smells which were found to exist in some parts of it; and if that is the case here, where such precautions are taken to insure proper sanitary arrangements, is it not more than probable that the erection of this dust destructor in a crowded district in North Kensington would become a source of injury and danger to the health of the inhabitants? I maintain that the destructor itself stands condemned by the Report of our own Committee last year. The Whitechapel destructor was originally approved by the Rev. Mr. Barnett, and I believe he was one of the witnesses who proved that it had not been injurious to the health of the locality. But what does Mr. Barnett say at this moment about the Whitechapel destructor? Let me mention another fact. The Vestry of Richmond put up a destructor in that parish some time ago; but the case went into the Court of Chancery, and, after hearing evidence, the Court pronounced it to be a nuisance and ordered it to be removed. Then let the right hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) go down to Richmond and put up his improved destructor there. If he can convince the Court of Chancery that it is an improvement, and that everything in the shape of a nuisance has been got rid of, it will be an admirable advertisement for the destructor; but if it proves to be a failure, as I fear it would, he will have to pay the cost of the experiment. In the event of success, the Vestry can come to the House again next year, and will be able to promote a Bill which will satisfy everybody. I will not trouble the House further; but I say emphatically that, living in the neighbourhood, I know a good deal about this question, and am convinced that the erection of this destructor is not only not desired by the vast majority of the inhabitants, but that it would injuriously affect the health of the population of this densely crowded neighbourhood. I am myself the chairman of a committee which has been appointed for taking the matter up, and I know that the greater part of the parishioners object to the Bill. It was only by accident that they became alive to the danger with which they were threatened. We have no wish to give a further opportunity of having this provision forced upon us at a time when we are not aware of what is going on.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I am well acquainted with the district in which it is proposed to put up this destructor, but the object of this Bill was only brought to my notice on the morning of the day on which it came on for discussion. The people of the locality have long had an idea that they ought to have a recreation ground, and that such recreation ground ought to be formed upon the very piece of ground which the Kensington Vestry propose to devote to the collection and destruction of the refuse of the parish. I conceive that it would be absolute nonsense to spend a large sum of money in providing a recreation ground, and then to erect a nuisance of this description upon it. ["Oh!"] I am speaking of what I know. The inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood are almost to a man against the destructor being erected, and if it is likely to be so delightful a thing, why does not the parish of Kensington have it placed nearer to the residences of the richer people—why force it upon this poor neighbourhood, where the poorest class of the people live? According to the evidence, the inhabitants who will be most affected know nothing about the intentions of the Vestry. I have taken a very active part in the local affairs of that district, and I certainly knew nothing whatever about it. I knew nothing at all about the Bill until it was brought before the House, and how is it possible for the poor people of the district to fight the Bill of the Vestry in circumstances of this kind? I hope the House will reject the Bill by a substantial majority.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 103; Noes 164: Majority 61.—(Div. List, No. 83.)

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put, and *agreed to.*

Third Reading *put off* for six months.

QUESTIONS.

ARMY—HORSES FOR ARTILLERY PURPOSES—PURCHASES IN CANADA.

Mr. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether it is true that 3,000 horses have been purchased in Canada for Artillery purposes by the Authorities of the War Office, and that these horses will be landed in the London Docks in the ensuing season; if so, whether he will be prepared to state at the proper time the total cost per head of such horses when landed, taking into account all losses from the time of purchase?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The statement quoted by my hon. Friend is not accurate. As I stated on a previous occasion, instructions have been given for the purchase of 300 horses in Canada, as an experiment, in the course of the present year. When they have all arrived a statement of their cost will be made out. I shall be glad to show it to my hon. Friend; but I must consider whether it can be made public.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THE GLENBEIGH EVICTIONS.

MR. T. FRY (Darlington) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the inmates from the five houses which were recently levelled at Coomasaharn, Glenbeigh, have found accommodation in the remaining two tenements in that place; and, if not, what has become of them; and, what has become of the tenants of the five houses destroyed by fire in Glenbeigh?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that all the persons referred to are now living in houses in the neighbourhood.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—COMMUNICATION IN THE WESTERN ISLANDS.

MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that the Island of Scalpay, in Harris, containing a population of 600, and where, during the fishing season, a large business is carried on, has neither post nor telegraph office; whether communication by post and telegraph has been sanctioned in the case of Barra and other localities in the Hebrides, as being essential to such communities; whether letters from Glasgow to Scalpay occupies sometimes 10 days in transmission; and, whether, now that the fishing season is approaching, he will confer upon Scalpay a post and telegraph office?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I am aware that Scalpay is without a post or telegraph office. Postal communication to Barra is a thing of long standing; but there is considerably more correspondence for Barra than for Scalpay, and each case of this kind must be dealt with on its merits. In regard to telegraphic communication to Barra, a guarantee from the inhabitants was obtained before the extension was sanctioned. Letters from Glasgow for Scalpay arrive at Harris on the second day after posting; but I cannot say how much time subsequently elapses before the letters reach Scalpay, as that must depend on the opportunities which the inhabitants have of sending to Harris for their correspondence. The attention of the Department has more than once been given to the question of establishing a post to Scalpay; but I regret to find that neither a post office nor a telegraph office could properly be given, unless the inhabitants were prepared to guarantee the Department against loss.

POOR LAW ELECTIONS (IRELAND)—VOTING PAPERS OF THE DUNGARVAN UNION.

MR. PYNE (Waterford, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the police refused to give out the voting papers of the Dungarvan Union at the recent Poor Law election; and, if the County of Waterford is paying a large sum for extra police; and, if so, whether he will see that the Dungarvan Union is refunded any loss they may have incurred by the refusal of the police to serve voting papers?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): According to the Police Regulations, the police are allowed to assist the Poor Law Authorities in the work referred to, so far as it can be done consistently with the demands made on their time by the regular police work. In the case of the Dungarvan Poor Law election, the police were unable to give out the voting papers, as they had other duties to attend to. The Guardians have no claim to compensation for any expense they may have incurred in consequence of the inability of the police to do the work for them.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—EXTRA POLICE STATION IN CO. WATERFORD.

Mr. PYNE (Waterford, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will give the number of extra police stations in Waterford County and City, and the number of police who have been sent out of the county to attend at other places at various times during the year; and the number of days they have been absent; also the number of police over and above the extra force that have been drafted into Waterford, and the number of days they remained in county or city?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): No extra police stations have been opened in Waterford County and City. The information asked for in the rest of the Question can scarcely be given within the limits of an answer; but I will give a Return to the hon. Member. In making the charges for extra police, allowance is always given for the number of police who have been sent out of the county to attend at other places at various times during the year.

POST OFFICE—PROMOTIONS IN THE LIVERPOOL POST OFFICE.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Postmaster General, Whether Second Division sorting clerk Mr. M'Dougall, in the Liverpool PostO ffice, has recently been promoted to the First Division, over the heads of 14 sorting clerks, all his seniors; and, whether such promotion was in direct violation of the Rules regulating promotion in the Post Office, and printed in the Official Instructions issued by him to Head Postmasters?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): It is the case, as put in the Question of the hon. Member, that Mr. M'Dougall has recently been promoted from the second to the first class of sorting clerks in the Liverpool Post Office, and that at the time of his promotion there were on the second class 14 senior clerks to himself. All of these 14 clerks, I am sorry to say, were reported to me as not qualified for the duties of the higher class.

ORDNANCE SURVEY DEPARTMENT—REDUCTIONS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether a large reduction of men employed in the Ninth Division of the Ordnance Survey Department is now taking place; whether this is in consequence of the near completion of the Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom; and, whether he can state how many, and which, counties are yet unsurveyed?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University) (who replied) said: A large reduction is being carried out in the Ninth Division of the Ordnance Survey Department, and arrangements have been made for making a similar reduction in the other Divisions of the Ordnance Survey Department this year. This is in consequence of the near completion of the Ordnance Survey of the United Kingdom. No county remains of which the survey is not either in progress or completed. The field surveys will be completed by August, 1887; the plans, with contours, will be completed by September 30, 1889, and the publication will be completed by March 31, 1890.

SCOTLAND—POLLUTIONS FROM THE CLYDE—LOCH LONG AND LOCH GOIL.

Colonel MALCOLM (Argyllshire) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether his attention has been called to the complaints, by the fishermen and residents along the shores of Loch Long and Loch Goil, of the grievous pollution of those waters by the discharge of the refuse dredged in the Clyde at the mouth of Loch Long, and the injury arising therefrom; and, whether, in the interests of the public, he will take steps to abate the nuisance?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The complaints to which the hon. and gallant Member refers have been brought to the notice of the Board of Trade, who are in communication with the Clyde Trustees on the subject.

BRITISH HONDURAS—THE GOVERNORSHIP.

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he has received a Memorial from Colonists of British Honduras protesting against the proposal to send back R. T. Goldsworthy, esquire, C.M.G., as Governor to that Colony, on the expiration of his leave of absence, on the ground that his administration has been extravagant and unconstitutional, and praying for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into these and other charges on the spot; and, whether he has taken, or purposes to take, any action in connection with the said Memorial?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I have received the Memorial referred to, and have called upon Mr. Goldsworthy for his Report upon it, which I shall consider with the allegations of the Memorial. I am, therefore, not at present in a position to state what action I shall take.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—THE GOLD COAST COLONY.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to the description of the condition of the Gold Coast Colony contained in a pamphlet entitled *The Land of Death*, written by Mr. Ernest Eiloart, and whether the Colonial Office intend to take any, and what, steps to remedy the grievances therein alleged to exist; whether it is the fact, as stated in the same pamphlet, that any criticism of the policy of the Government of the Colony in the public Press is punished by the Governor by disqualifying the critic for holding any public office; and, if so, whether such a policy of repression has the sanction and approval of the present Colonial Secretary; whether it is the fact that British Commerce to the Colony has decreased by some £3,000,000; and, if so, whether such decrease can be attributed to other, and what, causes than the present maladministration of the Colony; whether any, and what, communications or representations have been made to the Colonial Office in favour of fulfilling the pledges given to the Natives that their Native Legislative Assembly should be restored to them; what steps he proposes with a view to satisfying these representations; and, whether the Gold Coast Colony will be represented at the forthcoming Colonial Conference; and, if not, why not?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): My attention has been called to the pamphlet on the Gold Coast by Mr. Eiloart. I am bound to say that it is full of exaggerated and highly-coloured statements, and I cannot admit the existence of the grievances there alleged. Much has been done to improve the sanitary condition of the Colony, as is proved by Papers laid from time to time before Parliament, and these efforts will be continued. The difficulties, however, arising from climate and the habits and customs of the Natives are very great. I do not believe in the policy of repression stated in the Question. If it existed, it would not be sanctioned or approved. I presume £300,000 is meant, not £3,000,000. There was a decrease of trade in 1885 of about £300,000 as compared with 1884. This was due partly to the general depression of trade, but principally to the great fall in the price of palm oil, which is the staple export of the Colony. The price has fallen from £40 a-ton, at which it stood a few years ago, to £18 per ton. This result is mainly due to the competition of mineral oils. The assumption in the Question that the Colony is at present maladministered is unfounded. As no such pledge as is referred to was ever given to the Natives, no representations in favour of fulfilling it could well be made. I do not know what is meant by the "Native Legislative Assembly." The Gold Coast, in common with other Crown Colonies, will not be officially represented at the Colonial Conference. Mr. Swanzy has been invited to be present at the Conference on behalf of the Gold Coast.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—PRISON ACCOMMODATION.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in view of the introduction of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill, and the requirements for large prison accommodation which may be expected should the Bill become law, Whether the Government have abandoned the idea of closing Richmond Prison?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The Government do not apprehend any great increase in the demand for prison accommodation. The closing of Richmond Prison, however, has not yet been finally decided on.

MINES REGULATION ACTS—APPOINTMENT TO THE INSPECTORSHIP OF THE SOUTH WESTERN DISTRICT.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether in filling up the vacancy in the Mining Inspectorship of the South Western District, caused by the resignation, as reported in *The Mining World*, of Mr. Frecheville, he will have regard to the repeatedly expressed wishes of the Cornish miners that a practical Cornish miner should be appointed; and, whether he will consider the possibility of appointing, as an assistant to such Inspector, a working miner conversant with the wants and wishes of the men?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, it would be his duty to appoint that person who, from his knowledge and past experience, should seem to him to have the best qualifications for the office. If any practical Cornish miner should be found who possessed these qualifications he should be happy to appoint him. He did not intend to apply to the Treasury for their sanction to the appointment of an additional Inspector in the district.

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—POOLE AND WREXHAM.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is true that, in the town of Poole, there are 23 magistrates, and only 13 policemen; whether the present Lord Chancellor made five magistrates in 1886, of whom four were Tories, and one a Liberal; whether the town of Wrexham has no separate police force, but are supplied by the county with 15 policemen; whether there are at present 29 magistrates on the Borough Commission, and that two months ago there were 30; whether the present Lord Chancellor, in 1885, added four to the list; whether the Government intend making any further magisterial appointments in the above-mentioned towns; and, what was the reason for appointing so many?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, there were 31 gentlemen whose names appeared on the Commission of the Peace for the Borough of Poole. Of these, five were added by the present Lord Chancellor in December, 1885. It was said that four of these were Conservatives and one a Liberal. There were 14 policemen in Poole. There were now 29 magistrates in the Borough of Wrexham. The present Lord Chancellor added four names to the Commission in February, 1886, and the late Lord Chancellor added three more in July last. It had not been shown to the Lord Chancellor that in either of these boroughs additional Justices were required at the present time. The last appointments were made because, in the judgment of the Lord Chancellor, the state of the respective Benches rendered them desirable. He had no information as to the number of policemen in Wrexham; but he believed there was no separate borough police.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT LURGAN.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state how many members of the Royal Irish Constabulary were hit with stones or missiles during the disturbances at Lurgan on the 16th August last, and how many of these were assaulted by the Orange mobs; whether Sergeant Hudson of the County Cavan Police and two constables, who were placed on guard to protect the property of a Catholic merchant (Mr. Donnolly) were armed with guns or batons; whether these policemen were so fiercely attacked by the mob that Constable Clarke was rendered unfit for duty and had to be removed to lodgings; whether Constable Dunbar, a Lurgan policeman and a Protestant, who knew the people, was among the mob at the time when Sergeant Hudson and his men were endeavouring to drive them back; whether Constable Dunbar loudly called upon Hudson not to baton the people, and by his conduct encouraged the crowd to continue their assault on the police; whether Constable Dunbar or District Inspector Bigley prosecuted any of the members of the mob; whether Sergeant Hudson reported Constable Dunbar for insubordination and for having used, in the hearing of a stone-throwing mob, language calculated to incite the mob to renewed attacks on the police; whether the same Constable Dunbar was one of the witnesses who gave evidence against the Catholics, sent to prison for riot, at the last Armagh Assizes; whether, after Sergeant Hudson had reported Constable Dunbar, charges were preferred against himself by District Inspector Bigley; whether Mr. Bigley ever committed these charges to paper, or persevered in attempting to prove them, or otherwise gave Sergeant Hudson an opportunity of disproving them; whether Sergeant Hudson, time after time, sought to have an inquiry into the matter; why this inquiry was not granted by the Inspector General; whether there is any objection to produce the Correspondence on the matter; whether Mr. Bigley is the same District Inspector who attacked and knocked down the Catholic drummer at M'Gerron's Corner, and who gave orders to the police to fire at a Catholic crowd, in what he swore to be "an exclusively Catholic street," in Lurgan, on the 1st instant; whether he can state, on further inquiry, if this Catholic drummer was a rioter, as previously alleged; and, if so, whether he was prosecuted and convicted, and what sentence was imposed upon him; and, whether the Government will cause an inquiry to be made into the origin and cause of the riots at Lurgan on the 1st instant and in August last, also into the conduct of the police in connection therewith, and as to the best means to be adopted for preventing a recurrence of same?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, before the right hon. Gentleman answered the Question, perhaps he would allow him to ask him whether he would be prepared to institute an inquiry into all the disturbances which had taken place in Lurgan since the Act of Union, and indicate which political and religious Party had been the cause of the disturbances?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): As regards the Question of my hon. Friend who has just sat down, which relates to the last paragraph of the Question, I have to say that the Government see no cause to institute an inquiry as to the origin and cause of the riots which have occurred in Lurgan recently, or on any previous occasion. I think that the hon. Member who put down the Question would feel that to give a detailed answer to it would unduly press on the time of the House. If he will permit me to send him a Memorandum on the subject, perhaps that will satisfy him.

In reply to Mr. M'Cartan,

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he would send the hon. Gentleman the Memorandum to-morrow.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—MR. FERRITER, OF DINGLE.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Ferriter, of Dingle, is still in prison on the charge of having called out "Harvey Duff" and "Stringer" at a public meeting in Dingle on the 16th January last; how long he has been in prison; whether, considering that on the hearing of the case no evidence whatever was adduced to prove that the peaceable conduct of the meeting was in any way disturbed by Mr. Ferriter, or the least indication of attack upon either the Government reporter or the police was manifested, he will order his release; and, whether he will enable the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall, who was present at the meeting in question from first to last, to give him information as to what actually took place?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Mr. Ferriter has been in custody since the 18th of February, having been committed for two months in default of giving bail for his good behaviour for the offence of having been guilty of conduct calculated to lead to a breach of the peace. Evidence was given proving to the satisfaction of the magistrates that, following upon the use of the expressions referred to, several attempts were made to crush the Government reporter against the platform.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked, if the right hon. Gentleman was aware of Mr. Ferriter's motive in using the expressions "Harvey Duff" and "Stringer?"

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he did not know; but he must remind the hon. Member that these expressions might be meaningless to them, but that they were recognized watchwords, and, being recognized watchwords, would very easily lead to disturbance.

Mr. CONYBEARE asked, if the right hon. Gentleman was aware whether the names of the Government reporters were either "Harvey Duff" or "Stringer?" He himself was present during all that meeting, and he could swear that no attempt whatever had been made to crush the Government reporter. Perhaps he might be allowed to give such evidence as would enable the right hon. Gentleman to release this gentleman from custody.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had already stated that he hoped the hon. Member would give him all the information at his disposal. He regretted if the hon. Member had rebutting evidence, and if he had not an opportunity of laying it before the Court.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that it had been reported by the police that there was not a single disturbance; and, whether the alleged crushing was the ordinary swaying of the crowd, packed into a narrow part of the street on the occasion?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had only received the information which he had given.

Mr. CONYBEARE asked, if he would be permitted to lay such evidence before the right hon. Gentleman as would induce him to reconsider his decision?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—STRATFORD-ON-AVON BOARD OF GUARDIANS—INSPECTION OF WORKHOUSES.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been drawn to the report of a meeting of the Stratford-upon-Avon Board of Guardians, appearing in *The Daily Chronicle* of 19th March, at which it was stated by the clerk of the Board, that it was distinctly illegal for Guardians to inspect the workhouse unless accompanied by the master thereof; whether it is a common practice in Poor Law Unions to prevent Guardians from visiting the workhouses, unless they be on a visiting rota, and give notice of their intended visits to the master of the workhouse; and, whether, if such be the case, he will take care to put the visiting powers of Guardians on a more satisfactory footing?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have seen the report alluded to, which appears to have reference to the visit to the workhouse of an individual Guardian, who, on a Sunday, entered the workhouse by a back door while religious service was being conducted in the workhouse chapel. The Visiting Committee of a Board of Guardians may inspect the workhouse at all times; and the Guardians can confer similar power on an individual Guardian, whether or not he is a member of the Committee. Without the authority of the Guardians an individual Guardian, whether or not a member of the Committee, has, in strictness, no legal right to visit the workhouse. The master or matron need not necessarily accompany the Visiting Committee when visiting the workhouse, and it is quite competent to the Committee to direct the officer not to do so if, for any special reason, they desire this; but, as a general rule, it is desirable that the Committee or individual Guardian, when visiting the wards, should be accompanied by one of those officers. The Guardians have full power with regard to authorizing visits to the workhouse by individual Guardians, and I see no reason for any alteration in the law on subject.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—THE GOLD COAST COLONY.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the revenue of the Gold Coast Colony exceeds the expenditure; and, if so, what has been done with the money?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead), in reply, said, that after reserving £50,000 for unforeseen emergencies, a measure which had been urged on several Colonies as a precaution, and was specially valuable at the Gold Coast where the revenue was liable to fluctuations by tribal disturbances in the interior, there remained an estimated accumulated surplus of about

£28,000 on January 1, 1887. The estimates for the current year contained a provision of £23,000 for public works, the greater part, if not all, of which will have to be defrayed out of capital.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR wished to know, whether the Colonial Office exercised any influence over the local administration in those Colonies, in order to see that needful work was undertaken and properly carried out?

SIR HENRY HOLLAND promised to consider the suggestion, which he thought a useful one.

ADMIRALTY—DEFECTIVE WEAPONS—THE CUTLASS COMMITTEE.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, with reference to the Minute by the Secretary of State for War, dated 10th March, recommending to the Admiralty that at certain stations the present defective cutlasses should be retained, but sharpened, in accordance with the "recommendations of the Committee;" Whether the Cutlass Committee has made any recommendations of the kind, as to sharpening weapons which they describe as absolutely inefficient, untrustworthy, and unfit for service; and, whether he will undertake that such weapons shall be withdrawn, in all cases, with the least possible delay?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this Question, as my hon. Friend hardly seems to have understood the object of my Minute. It is intended to withdraw all these weapons, and to substitute for them those recommended by the Committee. But as some of Her Majesty's ships are on foreign stations, and the exchange cannot in these cases possibly take place immediately, I have suggested to the Admiralty to have the existing weapons sharpened in the manner which, according to experiments before the Committee, adds very considerably to their efficiency. But, of course, they will be exchanged as soon as it is possible.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Is it intended to withdraw any of the swords or bayonets used by the Royal Irish Constabulary; and does the right hon. Gentleman know whether any of these have been found to be inefficient?

MR. E. STANHOPE: I have no information on the subject.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE.

MR. FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Prime Minister, and others of Her Majesty's Ministers, concerned with the subjects for discussion at the Conference, meeting on the 4th April, will actually be Members of that Conference?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead), in reply, said, the Colonial Conference was a consultative body of persons, all belonging to the same Empire. There would not, therefore, be a formal exchange of full powers, as in the case of an International Conference. But those Members of Her Majesty's Government who took part in the Conference would be Members of that Conference equally with the Members selected by the responsible Government Colonies to take part in it.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—CONVICTIONS BY JURIES—A RETURN.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the Government will grant the Return as to Convictions by Juries in Ireland which stands on the Paper for Friday?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am afraid I cannot undertake to give the proposed Return, which, if compiled, might be defective and very misleading. Official records for the purpose do not exist.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) remarked that a complete record of such cases was kept in the Crown Office.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is mistaken. The particulars asked for in the proposed Return are not officially recorded.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BRISTOL AND SOUTH WALES.

MR. L. FRY (Bristol, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the mid-day mail between Bristol and South Wales has been discontinued since the opening of the Severn Tunnel; if he can state what mails, if any, are carried through the tunnel; and, whether steps will be taken, without delay, to afford to the districts concerned the full benefit in their postal arrangements of the improved communication established by the completion of the tunnel?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The mid-day mail between Bristol and South Wales has been forwarded *viâ* Gloucester since the withdrawal of the steam vessels between New Passage and Portskewett, the Severn Tunnel Railway not being included in the contract with the Railway Company for the conveyance of the mails. The Department is in correspondence with the Company respecting the terms on which they will convey mail bags by the trains which they are now running, or may hereafter run, through the tunnel.

SHOP HOURS REGULATION ACT, 1886 —PROCEDURE.

MR. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W. R., Doncaster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is aware that there are practical difficulties in the way of starting prosecutions under the Act to limit the hours of labour of Children and Young Persons in Shops, 1886 (49 & 50 *Vict.* c. 55), and whether he will consider the advisability of appointing Inspectors to carry out the provisions of the Act according to the intentions of the Legislature; and, whether he will issue instructions to the police to insist that the notice stating the number of hours in the week during which young persons may be lawfully employed in any particular shop shall be "kept exhibited in a conspicuous place" as required by Section 4 of the Act?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, his attention had not been called to the difficulty of starting prosecutions. He was not prepared to appoint Inspectors, or issue instructions to the police to insist that the notice stating the number of hours during which young persons might be lawfully employed should be kept conspicuously exhibited. According to such information as he could get, it was the intention both of the Select Committee and of the Legislature that the efficacy of the Act should depend, not upon any interference on the part of the Government, and still less upon direct Government inspections, but rather upon the action of individuals, or associations, interested in the subject.

EGYPT—SANITATION OF THE BRITISH TROOPS.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W. R., Holmfirth) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether he has obtained information from Egypt as to the statements made in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of 27th January, as to the establishment there, wherever our troops are stationed, of a system similar to that which prevailed under the Contagious Diseases Acts; and, what steps will be taken in the matter?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have received a Report on the subject from the General Officer Commanding in Egypt which I will show to the hon. Member, and which I shall have no objection, if he wishes it, to lay upon the Table. I may add that the arrangements appear to be mainly those of the Egyptian Government, which were in force before the arrival of the British troops.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) —(METROPOLITAN DISTRICT)— AUXILIARY POSTMEN.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, What answer has he given to the Petition of the auxiliary postmen of the Metropolitan District; whether these men, occupying such a responsible position, only receive an average pay of 4*d.* an hour while on duty; and, will he make arrangements to give the postmen a holiday on the 21st June?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): A Memorial has been recently received from certain officers in one district of London, who are not on the establishment, with regard to the rate of wages. The wages are 18*s.* a-week for an attendance of eight hours a-day, which they accepted when engaged. The statements in that Memorial are undergoing examination, and no answer has been given. Any arrangements in connection with a holiday on June 21 will be announced in due course.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) DESPATCH OF CONTINENTAL LETTERS FROM LIVERPOOL.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, having regard to the fact that letters for the Continent close at the Exchange, Liverpool, on Fridays at 1 p.m., while letters for India and Australia, also going by the night trains *viâ* the Continent, close at Liverpool at 11.15 a.m., he will make arrangements for all letters *viâ* the Continent to be received at Liverpool post offices up to 1 p.m. on Fridays?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I regret that the Post Office is unable to guarantee that letters from Liverpool for India and Australia shall be transmitted in the mails from London on Friday nights, unless they are posted at Liverpool not later than 11.15 a.m. It is true that letters for the Continent can be posted at Liverpool up to 1 p.m.; but correspondence for the Continent can be finally dealt with on the railway between London and Dover; whereas the mails for the East must be closed in London.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) —POSTAL FACILITIES IN WALES)— THE CAMBRIAN RAILWAY COMPANY.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Postmaster General, Whether any arrangement or agreement has been entered into with the Cambrian Railway Company to increase the postal facilities in the important districts of Wales?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): A definite offer has been made to the Cambrian Railway Company of an increased payment for mail service on their line, which, if accepted, will secure to the public certain additional postal facilities.

FRAUDULENT MARKING OF MERCHANDISE—THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, When the Select Committee on Bills in restraint of the Fraudulent Marking of Merchandise will be nominated?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to my hon. Friend, I can only say that I am as anxious as he is that there shall be no delay in forming the Committee on Bills relating to fraudulent marking. The formation of such a Committee does not rest with me; but I believe the names will be submitted to the House forthwith.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—THE WHITEBOY ACTS.

MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, seeing that under the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill, it is proposed to give to two magistrates summary jurisdiction and a maximum power of inflicting six months' imprisonment with hard labour for offences under the Whiteboy Acts, he will have the Whiteboy Acts, or such portions of them as are to be incorporated in the proposed Bill, printed along with the Bill, or separately, and distributed to Members, in order that the House may know what these offences are?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): It appears to me that the proposal of the hon. Member is not unreasonable, and I shall make inquiry to see if it can be conveniently carried out.

MR. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether it was not the case that previous to the passing of the Crimes Act in 1833, very elaborate Returns of this character and also giving the motive for these offences were laid on the Table of the House?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR thought it was extremely probable; but he did not know that a precedent which appeared to have been ignored since 1833 was necessary to be followed in this case.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Forster issued a large Blue Book on the subject?

[No reply.]

ADMIRALTY—OBSOLETE AND USELESS SHIPS.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, What principle is adopted in the disposal of obsolete and useless ships of the Royal Navy; whether they are submitted to public competition and sold to the highest bidder, or are disposed of to one privileged firm under special arrangements on a schedule of prices provided by the Admiralty; if recommendations have been made to the Admiralty against this mode of disposal; whether the *Modeste*, *Sappho*, *Foam*, *Boxer*, *Benbow*, and *Teazer*, were purchased by this one firm, and if he will state what they respectively realized; if he is willing that certain firms on the Thames who have expressed themselves desirous to tender, should have the opportunity given them to do so; and, also, if in the case of unarmoured, wooden, and certain other vessels, the Admiralty could themselves undertake the "breaking up" of such vessels with some saving to the Public Service, and provide work to many of the unemployed of the various shipyards?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD) (Lancashire, Ormskirk) (who replied) said: With respect to the obsolete vessels which the Board have determined to sell, tenders were invited by public advertisement in December last, and several offers received, but all were at so low a price that they were declined, and the vessels still remain unsold. No tender was on the last occasion received from any firm on the Thames. The Board are most anxious to extend the area of competition, and are open to receive offers from any person willing to buy at a fair market price. As to the sixth paragraph, I am afraid it would not prove a saving to the Public Service for the Admiralty to undertake the breaking up of ships even at their own Dockyards, much less at the private shipyards. The demand for old materials is not so good at the outports as it is on the Thames. Should, however, we not obtain proper offers we shall have to re-consider the subject.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked, if it was impossible to use any of these vessels for training ships?

MR. FORWOOD replied that none of them were condemned without proper examination and consideration.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE—CROWN COLONIES—THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether any replies have been received from the Governors or Administrators of Crown Colonies to any official invitation they may have received to take part in the Colonial Conference to assemble next Monday; and, whether the Government of the Straits Settlements is to be represented; and, if not, whether the Conference will take into consideration the strategic importance of Singapore?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): On the 25th of November last a Circular Despatch was written to the Crown Colonies inviting the Governors to recommend to the Secretary of State the names of gentlemen likely to be in England at the time of the Conference who could be present on behalf of their Colonies. Replies have been received from about 19 of them; and I have, in accordance with the original intention, sent out invitations, paying attention, as far as practicable, to the suggestions of the Governors. It has been considered desirable to select, as far as possible, unofficial gentlemen, rather than members of the Colonial Civil Service. Accordingly, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Paul Tidman, and Sir Andrew Clarke have been asked to be good enough to attend on April 4. Mr. Anderson is a member of the Straits Legislative Council; and it is hoped will arrive in time. Mr. Paul Tidman's name was suggested by the Straits Settlements Association, which was asked to propose a suitable candidate; and Sir Andrew Clarke is a former Governor of the Colony, and late Inspector General of Fortifications, and in that capacity was Chairman of the Colonial Defence Committee. The strategic importance of Singapore is fully recognized by the scheme of defence provided for it, which is being carried out at the joint expense of the Colonial and Imperial Governments.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS ACT, 1868—SELBY RAILWAY BRIDGE.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether it is a fact that the Selby Railway Bridge was condemned as unsafe, six years ago, by the Board of Trade; who is responsible for its safety; and, whether there is any official standard for measuring the distance between recognized insecurity and probable catastrophe?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I may at once let the hon. Member know that the North-Eastern Railway Bill of this Session takes powers to construct a new bridge in lieu of the existing bridge. The bridge at Selby was not condemned as unsafe six years ago by the Board of Trade, and the Company are responsible for its safety. I may add that by the Regulation of Railways Act, 1868, a certificate is required from the Company's engineer that the works are maintained in good working condition and repair, such certificate being published with the Company's half-yearly Reports.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS—IMPORTATION OF CATTLE FROM IRELAND.

Mr. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether his attention has been called to the state in which Irish cattle are landed at British ports from cross-Channel steamers; whether he will inquire into the cause of their arriving in worse condition after eight or ten hours at sea than American cattle after 10 or 12 days on the Atlantic; whether the Regulations provide for ventilation and sufficient air space, or only deal with standing room; and, whether the Government will cause a Departmental Inquiry into this important matter, with a view to meet the complaints of those interested in the trade on both sides of the Channel?

The CHANCELLOR of the DUCHY (Lord John Manners) (Leicestershire, E.): No complaints have been received recently of the state in which Irish cattle are landed at British ports; but Irish stores in the busy season are sometimes overcrowded, and are knocked about a good deal in crossing. The Regulations require the ventilation of vessels in such a manner as to secure a proper supply of air in all states of weather. An exhaustive inquiry on the subject was held in 1878, the result of which was laid before Parliament, and nothing has since come to notice to call for further inquiry.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—GEORGE CHAPMAN, J.P., A BANKRUPT.

Mr. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been drawn to the reports of the examinations of George Chapman, J.P., a bankrupt, published in the Stockport papers, in which he admitted very extensive breaches of trust and misappropriation of trust monies; and, whether he will call the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the matter?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have not seen the report of the proceedings in this case; but I have called the attention of the Lord Chancellor to the hon. Member's Question.

WAR OFFICE — OFFENCES, &c. AT POLITICAL MEETINGS—THE QUEEN'S REGULATIONS.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Article of the Queen's Regulations, section 6, paragraph 9, forbidding

> "Officers, Non-Commissioned officers, and private Soldiers to institute or take any part in any meetings, demonstrations, or processions for party or political purposes, in barracks, quarters, or camp, or in their vicinity,"

is to be construed so as to prevent such officers and soldiers from attending, as part of the audience, a meeting held for the purpose of hearing a political leader speak; whether the officers and men are thereby forbidden to become members of a Parliamentary Debating Society, consisting of persons of all shades of political opinion; and whether the said Article precludes officers and men from becoming members of such a partizan Association as the Primrose League; and, if so, what steps he will take to warn all those officers or non-commissioned officers who are members of the Primrose League that they are breaking the Queen's Regulations?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Provided that the conditions of the Article are complied with, my answer to all the Questions of the hon. Member is in the negative.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — THE RESIDENT MAGISTRACY.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will inform the House how many of the Resident Magistrates in Ireland were officers in the Army, Navy, or Constabulary before their appointment to the Magistracy; and, how many are Protestants?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I notice that a Return on this subject is down on the Paper to-day in the name of the hon. Member for the Stephen's Green Division of Dublin (Mr. Gray). That Return gives the information asked for in the first paragraph of the Question. As regards the second paragraph, there is no official information as to the religious profession of Resident Magistrates; and I do not think it will be for the public advantage to make personal inquiry into the matter.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a Return was recently laid on the Table giving the religious professions of magistrates other than Resident Magistrates?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware of that.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER: If that is so, and if there is no objection to lay a Return with reference to the unpaid magistrates, will the right hon. Gentleman say whether there should be any objection to give the same information in respect to the paid magistrates?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it is quite possible that there may be objections; but I will re-consider the matter, and if the right hon. Gentleman will repeat the Question I will answer it later on.

Mr. H. J. GILL (Limerick): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the information is already in the possession of the Government in the Irish Census Returns?

[No reply.]

POST OFFICE—THE TRANS-CONTINENTAL MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, in the agreement for the carriage of British mails for Australia, the East, &c., across the Continent, and under which we submit to a toll of 1½*d.* per letter, there is any Clause compelling us to send the whole of our mails by that route; and, if so, whether penalties for breach of agreement are provided; and, secondly, what steps he is taking to secure the use of the Trans-Continental service on more equitable and reasonable terms?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): Under the agreement referred to by the hon. Member, the British Post Office is bound to send by the accelerated Indian mail train all mails for the East which make use of the Brindisi route, and this in return for concessions granted by the French and Italian Post Offices. Any breach of the agreement would simply lead to its termination. I have already stated, in reply to a previous Question of the hon. Member, that it is intended to make renewed efforts to obtain more favourable terms for the transit of the Indian mail *viâ* Brindisi as soon as the new service for the Australian mails is settled. Pending the settlement of that question, negotiations could not be opened with advantage.

POST OFFICE CONTRACTS—CONVEYANCE OF THE INDIAN MAILS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Whether a saving of £107,000 per annum has been made by the new contract just concluded for the conveyance of the Indian Mails; whether the total revenue from the Indian Mail Service is only £55,000 a-year; and, whether he proposes to avail himself of this saving (under which, as compared with the previous cost of the service, the whole of the mails to India and the East might be carried free), to make a substantial reduction in the rates of postage, approximating them, as far as possible, to the rates from France and Germany, which are only half the rates charged on letters posted for India in England?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): There will be a saving, as the hon. Member supposes, of £107,000 a-year under the new contract for the India and China Mail Service, which comes into operation early next year. The sum of £55,000 a-year is the estimated amount of revenue derived from that portion of the postage which is proper to the Contract Packet Service. As to any reduction of postage rates, consequent on the saving under the new contract, that is a question which it will not rest with me to determine. I may add that, even under the terms of the new contract, there will still be a considerable loss on the Indian Postal Service.

SUPPLY—THE ESTIMATES—THE CONTROLLER OF STAMPS AND STORES, AND CHIEF INSPECTOR OF TAXES—SALARIES.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the salaries of the Controller of Stamps and Stores, and of the Chief Inspector of Taxes, at Somerset House, have been respectively increased from £1,000 to £1,100 per annum, as indicated by the Estimates for the ensuing financial year; and, if so, on what date the increase in each case first took effect?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): The salaries of the officials in question have been increased as stated. In the case of the Controller of Stamps and Stores the increase was sanctioned in August, and took effect from the 1st of October, 1886, and in that of the Chief Inspector of Taxes the increase was sanctioned in April of last year, and took effect from the first of May last. Perhaps I ought to add that new and additional duties have been imposed on both these officers; and in the case of the Controller of Stamps the £100 a-year will be repaid by the Indian Government.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT—TRAMWAY SERVANTS — "COOK *v.* THE NORTH METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS COMPANY."

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the judgment of the Queen's Bench Division, on Saturday last, in the case of "Cook *v.* The North Metropolitan Tramways Company," which decides that a driver of a tramcar is not entitled to the benefit of the Employers' Liability Act; and whether he will see that the drivers and conductors of tramcars shall be included in the promised Bill amending and renewing the said Act?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I have seen the case referred to, and it is my intention to include tramway servants in the Employers' Liability Bill.

FINANCE—REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE — EXCHEQUER ISSUES AND RECEIPTS.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether there is any objection to publishing a statement, at the close of the financial year, showing the Exchequer issues for expenditure as well as the Revenue receipts, and also an account of any unexpended balances from the previous year which may have been available during the year in aid of the expenditure of the several Departments; and, whether there is any reason why the condition of the expenditure, which is regularly stated in the weekly account, should not equally be set forth in the final account at the close of the financial year?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The statement which was made public at the close of the financial year mainly consists of a comparative statement of the Revenue, and the weekly account published in *The Gazette* gives the total expenditure as well as receipts. It has always been the custom to withhold the last account of the year until the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made his Financial Statement. It has always been reserved to him to deal with the full facts. I propose, on this occasion, to follow the precedent of my Predecessors; but I will undertake to consider the question before I introduce my Budget of 1887-8, and decide whether I shall be able to act upon it.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us when his Financial Statement will be made?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes, Sir; I have much pleasure in stating that it will be made as soon as possible after the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—THE RESIDENT MAGISTRATES.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it intended that the Resident Magistrates who will exercise jurisdiction under the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill shall be irremovable except on an Address from both Houses; if not, will any guarantees be taken to render them independent of the Executive for the time being; what salary will they receive; will they be confined in the exercise of their powers to one district, or will they be transferable from one place to another at the pleasure of the Government; and, are Resident Magistrates at present appointed for a definite period, or how?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The Government propose to follow the precedent set by the Crimes Act of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir William Harcourt. There will be no alteration in status of the Resident Magistrates. The conditions of the appointment and salaries of these officers are fixed by Statute.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) wished to have an answer to the Question, if the Resident Magistrates were at present appointed for a definite period, or how?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had stated that the conditions on which they held office were prescribed by Statute. He believed, as a matter of fact, that the Statute laid down that they should be appointed by order of the Lord Lieutenant.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked whether the Statute did not lay down that a definite number should be appointed; and, whether that number had not been exceeded?

[No reply.]

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—A PURCHASE BILL.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Is it intended that the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill shall not become operative unless a Purchase Bill becomes Law, and can he give the number of prosecutions in each of the following cases:—

> "Out of six cases of murder there was one conviction; out of 16 cases of firing at the person there was one conviction; out of 21 cases of burglary there were four convictions; out of 43 cases of firing at dwellings there was no conviction; out of 73 cases of maiming cattle there was no conviction?"

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): The Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill will become operative as soon as it has received the sanction of Parliament. The Government do not propose to tie the two measures mentioned together; but it will be an immense satisfaction to Her Majesty's Government if they are able to pass the Land Purchase Bill this Session, as well as the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. With regard to the statistics about which the hon. and learned Member inquires, I cannot state the number of prosecutions in each case; but I presume the hon. and learned Member will be satisfied if I name the number of cases in which offenders were made amenable, that being the ordinary form in which Returns are presented to Parliament.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Returned for trial before a jury is the point of my Question.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The ordinary form in which the statistics have been presented to Parliament, if I am not mistaken, is a tabular form giving, first, the number of offences; secondly, the number made amenable; and, thirdly, the number of convictions obtained.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: That is not the point. The right hon. Gentleman stated in his speech that juries had failed to convict in certain cases, and I want to know how many of these cases were brought before juries?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I will give the number of cases in which they were made amenable.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: What we understand by "being made amenable" is being arraigned.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I will present the figures as they have been previously given to Parliament. There are two difficulties with which the Government have to deal—the difficulty of getting evidence, and the difficulty of obtaining convictions upon evidence. The clause of the Government Bill with regard to a preliminary inquiry, without any specific person being charged with crime, is intended to deal with that part of the difficulty which consists in getting evidence; and there are other clauses of the Bill directed to the same object. These are the figures: Out of the six cases of murder, there were three in which no evidence at all could be obtained in order to make a person amenable. There were three in which persons were made amenable, and one in which a conviction was obtained. In the 16 cases of firing at the person, there were seven in which persons were made amenable, and in one case a conviction was obtained. In the 21 cases of burglary, there were eight in which persons were made amenable, and four in which convictions were obtained. In the 43 cases of firing into dwelling-houses, there were five in which persons were made amenable, and no convictions were obtained; and out of the 73 cases of that detestable crime, the maiming of cattle, there were only two in which persons could be made amenable, and no one was convicted. No evidence could be obtained with regard to those crimes. The upshot of the whole is that out of the 159 crimes of a most serious character, there were only 25 in which any person could be made amenable, and only six in which convictions could be obtained; so that there are 24 chances to one in favour of the escape of a criminal in a case of agrarian outrage.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) asked, whether it was not the fact that in some of those cases which were given as cases in which a conviction could not be obtained the prisoners were still in custody, and that trials in many cases were still pending?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I cannot answer that question without inquiry. The Return has already been laid on the Table of the House, and hon. Members will be able to examine it for themselves. I have dealt with the figures as they have always been presented to the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman would have any objection to give the number of prisoners arraigned, and the number of convictions?

Mr. GOSCHEN: That is a question for the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I have dealt fairly with the figures as they have been previously presented to the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY then put his question to the Chief Secretary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I will make inquiry.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Arising out of this subject, may I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is not a principle of the English law that every man accused of crime shall be deemed innocent until he is proved guilty; and, if so, by what right——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! Mr. Hanbury. [*Laughter.*]

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT) — DEFECTIVE WEAPONS — THE CUTLASS COMMITTEE.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether any, and, if any, what, tests have since 1871 been substituted for those which were in use in that year, and which the Cutlass Committee has shown to be wholly useless; when such fresh tests were instituted, who is responsible for them, and whether they are, in the opinion of the Surveyor General, still adequate; whether he will publish the correspondence between the Committee and Major General Alderson, Director of Artillery and Stores, mentioned in the Report; who is responsible for the appointment of the Superintendents of the Enfield Factory, under whose superintendence such mismanagement and inefficiency have been shown to exist; and what guarantee is taken that the officials appointed to posts requiring technical knowledge and experience in manufacture possess such knowledge and experience?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. Northcote) (Exeter): As regards the first three paragraphs of my hon. Friend's Question, if he will wait the production of the evidence taken before the Cutlass Committee, which will, I hope, be issued next week, and which will include a Paper of General Alderson's, he will find full information. As regards the last two paragraphs the answer is, the Secretary of State for War for the time being, who is responsible to Parliament for the appointments he makes.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS IN MINES—COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he is prepared to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission for the Prevention of Accidents in Mines, with regard to the prohibition of the use of gunpowder in fiery or dusty mines, and the substitution of other explosives in properly protected cartridges; and, whether the Coal Mines Regulation Bill is likely to be reached this Session?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): The recommendations of the Royal Commission have been carefully considered, and the Bill imposes special restrictions on blasting in fiery mines and dusty mines, and in certain cases in which gunpowder is prohibited allows the use of high explosives, with water or the like appliances. The Bill will be circulated at once, and I still hope it will be passed this Session.

COTTAGE ALLOTMENTS—LEGISLATION.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the importance of legislation upon the subject of allotments being proceeded with at the earliest possible date, the Government will bring in their promised Allotments Bill directly after Easter, and arrange so that it and the Cottagers' (Allotments) Bill, the Allotments and Cottage Gardens Compensation Bill, the Allotments of Land Bill, and the Parish Allotments Committees Bill may be read a second time and referred to a Select Committee?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I must repeat the answer I have already given to similar Questions. I cannot make any arrangement with regard to Bills with which the Government are anxious to proceed in this House, until the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill is disposed of.

SCOTCH FISHERY BOARD—RE-CONSTITUTION.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to re-constitute the Scotch Fishery Board by placing thereon some persons practically acquainted with the fishing industry; or whether, on the termination of the tenure of office of the existing Board, it is intended to re-appoint the existing members of the Board; and, when the Annual Report of the Scotch Fishery Board will be laid upon the Table of the House? The hon. Member also asked whether any changes were contemplated with regard to the scientific advisers of the Board?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I cannot answer the last Question without Notice. The question of the re-constitution of the Fishery Board is receiving the attention of the Government, and will be duly considered prior to October next, when the term of office of six members of the Board expires. It is hoped that the Annual Report of the Board will be laid upon the Table of the House about the end of May. The preparation of the Report, which will this year contain, besides the usual elaborate statistics of various fisheries, details of the experiments made in the waters closed against beam trawling, necessarily involves the expenditure of much time and labour.

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS—THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments has completed its inquiry into the establishment of the War Office; and, whether the Commission will issue separate Reports on the completion of their inquiry into the respective Departments, and so avoid the long delay which must occur if their Report is deferred until the whole of the Establishments have undergone investigation?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am informed that the Commission on Civil Establishments has not entirely completed its inquiry into the establishment of the War Office; and, further, that it is the intention of the Commissioners to present Reports *ad interim* as they find it possible during the course of their investigation.

ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—THE COMMITTEE OF EXAMINATION.

MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he proposes to have one or two Committees to examine the Army and Navy Estimates; of how many Members will such Committee or Committees consist; whether they will have power to call and examine witnesses from the Government Offices and elsewhere; whether, after the Committee or Committees have reported, the Estimates will still require to be submitted to the House and voted in the usual way; and, whether he will undertake that ample time shall be allowed for this important duty of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is proposed, following the precedent of the former Committee, to refer both the Army and Navy Estimates to the same Committee, and that it should have the usual power of sending for persons, papers, and records. Nowithstanding the reference to the Committee, the Estimates must be voted in the usual way in Committee of the Whole House. When the House has agreed to the appointment of this Committee, the number and constitution of the Committee must be considered in consultation between the various Parties in the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked how many Members there would be on the Committee?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to say absolutely; but I think it is proposed that the number should be 25.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE—THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of the Government that India shall be wholly unrepresented at the Conference, which is to be held in London next month, for the purpose, chiefly, of discussing the subjects of Imperial Postage and Imperial Defence?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): It is not proposed that India should be officially represented at the Colonial Conference; but should it be desired by the Secretary of State for India that any person should be present on behalf of India during the discussion on postal and telegraphic communications, an invitation will be sent to the persons he may nominate for that purpose.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—DEATH OF HANLON—ARREST OF SUB-INSPECTOR SOMERVILLE AND CONSTABLE WARD.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland, Whether it was by his instructions that Sub-Inspector Somerville and Constable Ward, who were in custody charged with wilful murder, were allowed out on their own recognizances by the Court of Queen's Bench; and, whether they have been permitted to resume their duties in the Royal Irish Constabulary pending their trial?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): I gave no instructions whatever, as to the amount of bail; but I did in this case what I am in the habit of doing in all other cases—when the informations were laid before me I considered them; and, concerning that justice so required, I instructed the Representatives of the Crown to consent to their being allowed out on bail; but it was for the Court to fix the amount of the bail. I have nothing whatever to do with the resumption of their duties.

MR. LANE: I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman, if he approves of these two men, who are charged with wilful murder, being let out on their own recognizances?

MR. HOLMES: Certainly. I approve of any decision given by a Court of competent jurisdiction.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman, Whether it is the intention of the Representatives of the Government to bring these two men charged with murder before a Bench of Magistrates, and to prefer an indictment against them; or, whether they are going to proceed against them by inquisition of the Coroner?

MR. HOLMES: I propose to consider the matter in due course. I have not yet had an opportunity of consulting with the Crown Solicitor on the point; but, as the hon. and learned Member is aware, matters cannot be done all at once.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—CRIMINAL STATISTICS—POLICE REPORTS.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reference to the numbers he had given, Whether he was aware that the criminal statistics of Ireland furnished the number of the offences reported to the police as compared with the number of convictions, whereas the statistics of this country showed only the number of persons committed and the number of persons convicted; and, whether he would furnish a Return giving similar information for both countries, that was—the number of crimes of different kinds which were reported by the police in this country?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, that surely the hon. Member must know that that matter was entirely out of his Department. He had used the figures as to crime in Ireland according to the customary form in which they were supplied to the House. The preparation of criminal statistics rested with the Home Secretary and the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, Whether it was not customary, and the practice until, I think, Midsummer, 1886, to lay before the House the tables which enabled those who read them to find out how many persons were made amenable and returned for trial, how many were convicted, and various other particulars; and why these Returns are not now laid before us?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I rather think that they are still laid.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY dissented.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Attorney General for Ireland to explain what was the meaning of the term "made amenable."

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Holmes) (Dublin University), said, that the hon. Member was probably aware that the Returns laid before Parliament had been given for a great number of years. The interpretation which he was in the habit of placing on persons being described as made amenable, was that they were brought for trial before a Court of competent jurisdiction. The cases to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred were all brought either before the Court of Quarter Sessions or the Court of Assize and tried before a jury.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): That does not, I presume, include persons who are merely brought before magistrates at Petty Sessions?

Mr. HOLMES: I think not, Sir. I think it means that they are brought before a Court competent to try the case.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked the Chief Secretary, whether he would lay upon the Table of the House a Statement of the number of outrages reported within the last 12 months by bailiffs, rent agents, emergency men, and persons caring evicted farms?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I cannot undertake to make inquiry into each case.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

——o——

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. FIRST READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [28th March],

> "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the prevention and punishment of Crime in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) said, that when the Government brought in a Coercion Bill the *onus probandi* of showing its necessity obviously rested with those who introduced it, and the Opposition were not bound to find arguments against it. That was all the more necessary on the present occasion, because the presumption was that any Coercion Bill for Ireland would prove a failure. Were it not so they would not now be dealing with the 87th Coercion Bill. The only hon. Member of the House who appeared to be under the impression that Coercion Bills ever proved successful, was the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain). That right hon. Gentleman boasted and gloried the other day over the fact that the Crimes Act of 1882 had proved successful. He had no doubt that the words of the right hon. Gentleman had great weight with the Party opposite; but he did not think they would outweigh those used by the Prime Minister in his speech at Newport, who said it was not true that the Crimes Act of that year did diminish outrages. What was the argument used in support of this Bill? Practically it was a syllogism. They were told that it was the first duty of a Government to maintain law and order in Ireland, and that therefore the Government was justified in asking for these exceptional powers. He (Mr. Labouchere) altogether denied the premisses and the conclusion of the syllogism. They had had three speeches from the Front Treasury Bench in favour of the present measure. The speech of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) consisted almost entirely of the old stable hack—an attack on the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). When hon. Gentlemen opposite had nothing to say that was germane to the subject they immediately turned on the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and tried to prove that he was one of the most dangerous—not to say wicked—Ministers who had ever existed, or who ever would exist. [*Cheers.*] Precisely, he thought so. When the noble Lord had gone through the usual attack on the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, he proceeded to praise his brother. Fraternal affection was all very well, but there were so many Gentlemen connected with the Peerage on the Treasury Bench that their debates would never come to an end if those Gentlemen were each to get up and for an hour defend their own relatives. The noble Lord said his brother's tenants loved their landlord because they had voted against the Home Rule candidate. How did he know how they had voted? Those unfortunate people were so intimidated by their landlord that they could not call their souls or their votes their own; and they had to prove and to show that they had voted in favour of their landlord in order that his brother might come down to that House and give it as evidence that they loved him. Well, a very short time ago the leaseholders on the Duke of Abercorn's estate held a meeting and denounced the treatment they received. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) had also attacked the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and his speech, though much lauded in the newspapers, was merely an amplification of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley). The late Chief Secretary laid it down that the first duty of the Government was to maintain law and order. Now, he (Mr. Labouchere) entirely denied that proposition. Law and order should not be bracketed together, because the worst disorders that ever occurred in the world were due to laws—to unjust laws. Just laws were all very well, but unjust laws promoted disorder. It was the common parrot cry of despots that it was necessary to strengthen the law to maintain law and order. The Emperor of Russia had transported half the people of Poland on the plea of maintaining law and order there. The Emperor Napoleon was never tired of saying that he wished to maintain law and order whenever he wanted to transport French people to Cayenne. Charles I. wanted to maintain law and order, and the people, most properly, cut his head off. James II. wanted to maintain law and order, and he was turned out of the country. Why was there disorder now in Ireland? Because they were always maintaining execrable laws there in defiance of the will of the Irish people. What Gentlemen on the Government side of the House did not seem to understand was that they were not dealing with individuals, but with a nation. It was the first right of a nation not only to make their laws, but to be the judge of their laws. Let them allow Ireland to make its own laws, and they would have no reason to complain. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary told them that Bili was perfectly legitimate, because the Liberals had also proposed Coercion Bills. His withers were unwrung because he had voted against previous Coercion Bills; but it did not necessarily follow because the Liberal Party were in favour of Coercion Bills five years ago that they should be in favour of them now. On the contrary, they had tried them and found them to fail, and they were determined to have nothing to do with them in future. When a doctor had tried a particular remedy on 100 patients, and they had all died, ought he to go on applying it to 100 more patients? The remedy of the Liberal Party was Home Rule, and if that were adopted coercion would not be necessary. The Gentlemen who called themselves Unionists seemed determined to act like George III., and to persist in their errors until they should be compelled to abandon them by some calamity analogous to the American War of Independence. In the Southern States of America, during the time of Mr. Andrew Johnson and his successors, intimidation and outrage flourished. In 1876, when Home Rule was granted to those States, all the terrorism and outrage ceased, and the Union of the American States was built upon recognized Home Rule. The Liberal Party had a remedy, and they knew perfectly well that if that remedy were adopted coercion would become unnecessary. The right hon. Gentleman's speech in introducing the matter was not distinguished by his usual clearness. It was vague, incoherent, and contradictory. He must say—speaking artistically—that he was exceedingly disappointed with it. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to know nothing about Ireland; but that was not his fault, as he was a Scotchman who had no connection with Ireland. He did think, however, that the right hon. Gentleman might have got up his case a little better. He seemed to be under the impression that a Coercion Bill ought to be passed for Ireland. He did not know particularly why, and he did not particularly care. Some sort of reasons ought, he supposed, to be given for it, and so he gave them; but, after stating his reasons, he added—"On these I do not rely." His whole speech was that of one who was content to base his action on the principle, "*Sic volo, sic jubeo.*" The right hon. Gentleman drew a terrible picture of Ireland and the anarchy which prevailed in the greater part of the country. He said if a man remained in his house during the night the odds were that he would be shot; if he went out the odds were that on his return he would find that his wife and daughters would be ravished. Hon. Members from Ireland must judge whether that was a fair and legitimate picture; but then, the right hon. Gentleman thought he must give some statistics. He seemed to have a kind of contempt for statistics—the same contempt as Mr. Mantalini had for halfpence. But the right hon. Gentleman did quote some statistics, and stated that since last July 755 crimes, not political or agrarian crimes, had come before the Courts, and that 531 crimes of which no clue had been found had been committed. These figures, however, only showed that three crimes were committed per diem; while in London, in nearly every Police Court, three men were committed for trial every day. The right hon. Gentleman said that juries would not convict. He should like to draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the following evidence of the Crown Solicitor for Tipperary, Mr. G. Bolton, given before the Select Committee on Irish Jury Laws in 1881:—

> "There is no difficulty whatever in getting convictions for robberies or larcenies, because in Tipperary these offences have always been regarded as disgraceful. If you ask a prisoner whether he has been convicted, he will reply, 'Yes; but, thank God, it was for nothing disgraceful.'"

The right hon. Gentleman had not been quite fair in his selection of passages from Judges' charges, for he picked and chose them to suit his case. Everybody knew that an Irish Judge was made a Judge because he was a partizan. There was not a single Judge on the Bench who had not spoken in opposition to the National League. [Mr. T. M. HEALY: Yes, Baron Dowse.] Well, there was one, but one swallow could not make a summer. About the judicial harangues referred to by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, there was this peculiarity that they were all made at a time when there happened to be a vacancy in the Court of Common Pleas. Surely, that was an odd coincidence? The right hon. Gentleman had supplemented his case by a series of anecdotes. There was nothing more objectionable than for a Minister of the Crown to ask the House to pass a Bill the necessity for which was supported by anonymous anecdotes. But if the right hon. Gentleman could not give some authority for his stories, he ought not to have quoted them. He told one story of somebody who went to the

Usher of the Court to ask him some question about serving on a jury. Now, that story must have been told by the Usher to somebody else, who told it to somebody else, and so it at last got to the ears of somebody in Dublin Castle, who passed it on to the right hon. Gentleman. Now, really that kind of thing was too bad. Then the right hon. Gentleman actually accused the National League of putting down crime; he said the actual number of crimes had decreased through the intimidation of the League. The right hon. Gentleman had very few figures to give them. He did not base his Bill on figures. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, said that this would not do, remembering that when the late Mr. Forster wanted to bring in a Coercion Bill he produced a large Blue Book full of cases of crime, most of which, however, were afterwards exploded in the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer produced some figures. He spoke of a number of 1,566 offences in Ireland; but he told the House nothing about them, and the House wanted to know—they wanted to know how many of those offences were mere threatening letters, how many were tried, and how many were made amenable to the law. The right hon. Gentleman need not shrug his shoulders? They claimed it as a right that before any Coercion Bill was passed in the House based upon the number of crimes committed in Ireland, that they should be clearly set down in a Blue Book, so that hon. Members might know all about them. The right hon. Gentleman said that juries would not convict. Very likely they would not for political offences. The peculiarity of juries in that respect was not confined to Ireland; the liberties of England were due to the determination of English juries not to convict in political cases. Did the right hon. Gentleman remember the trial of Queen Caroline? On that famous occasion all the Liberals voted on one side and all the Tories on the other, and they all declared that they voted according to their honour and conscience, yet nobody proposed on that occasion to abolish the House of Lords. He wished they had. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared that the reason for bringing prisoners from Ireland to this country was that the safety of the jurors might not be jeopardized. In Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman said—"The names of jurors are made public, and that is un-Constitutional." The right hon. Gentleman apparently had forgotten that the names of jurors were made public in this country also. They were called from the panel, and anybody in Court at the time could take a note of them. He thought it was not so surprising that juries should be bad in Ireland, as that any juries should be good, considering the way in which not only this Government but others as well had tried to get convictions by packing juries—thus demoralizing and discrediting the jury system. He thought, then, that they might take it that there was no exceptional crime in Ireland. With regard to what had been said as to agrarian crime, that was a mere pretext. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had attacked the National League, and had complained that it had been the head of the Plan of Campaign. As a matter of fact, the National League had nothing to do with the Plan of Campaign, and had kept out of it. For his own part, he believed that the Plan of Campaign was perfectly legitimate. It had not been quite technically legal, perhaps, in some points, but it had retained the spirit of the law at the expense, perhaps, of the letter; it had been simply a plan to enable those persons who lived on estates which were admitted even by the Government to be rack-rented, to carry out the principles of the Land Act of 1881. Those principles were that the first charge on the land was the right of the occupier to live and thrive, and that rent was but the second charge, the margin which existed after the first charge had been fully met. In the cases dealt with by the Plan of Campaign this had not been the case; the tenants could not live and thrive. Some of them, perhaps, could; but they had been quite right to stick together, rich and poor. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been indignant at the Plan of Campaign being compared to a trade union; but Sir George Cornewall Lewis had described Whiteboy associations as trade unions for the protection of the peasantry, and the plan was an adaptation, *mutatis mutandis*, of the principles of a trade union. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to consider property an absolute fetish. For his own part, he had never known anyone who was such an abject worshipper of the golden calf as the right hon. Gentleman. Let it be a rack-renting Irish landlord or a usurious Egyptian bondholder, the right hon. Gentleman's cry, like Shylock's, was always for "the bond, the bond," on the ground that "contracts must be maintained." But he (Mr. Labouchere) would inform him that there was no contract where there was either force or fraud, and the Irish peasants had been forced into their bargains by being told that it was necessary in order to get the benefits of the Act. They had heard a good deal about robbery, but he thought the robbers were the landlords and not the tenants. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had made the remarkable discovery that the National League was a political institution, and had told them with horror depicted in his face of a speech of the hon. Member for North Fermanagh (Mr. W. H. Redmond) about striking a blow for the Irish nation and the green flag. But that was precisely what everybody knew the Irish people were doing. Then the right hon. Gentleman had fallen back on Boycotting and intimidation, and had given some general evidence to show what that intimidation was—among that evidence being the case of the midwife who had not been allowed to attend on the wife of a Boycotted man, But *The St. James's Gazette* boasted that that was their story. Where did the right hon. Gentleman get it from? From *The St. James's Gazette?* [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No.] At all events, *The St. James's Gazette* claimed the story as its exclusive property. He confessed for his part that he would not believe one single story on the evidence of *The St. James's Gazette.* Why, the right hon. Gentleman would next quote *The Times!* They had had a horrible story in *The Times* the other day, which had since been contradicted, or the right hon. Gentleman would no doubt have cited it, as to some people having been ravished. The story had been denied in that House, but he would point out that *The Times* had never denied the story. He cited this to show of how little value these cock-and-bull stories were with regard to Ireland. Then they had heard the story from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the child which had been refused food and had died. But it had turned out that that had happened as long ago as 1883, and also, as far as the evidence went from which the right hon. Gentleman had quoted, there was nothing to show that the child was not still living. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had accused the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian of attempting to palliate outrages, but the right hon. Gentleman had done nothing of the kind. He had had a perfect right to say that they ought not on account of one single case to crush out the liberties of a people, and he had had a perfect right to point out that that particular form of barbarity had been introduced by ourselves while engaged in such an attempt. There was very gross exaggeration with regard to these stories from Ireland. Emergency men and the men who took farms from which others had been evicted were the most disreputable class in Ireland, and wished to curry favour with those who employed them. Among the tenants they were ever hearing of some wonderful Nicodemus who sneaked to the landlord in the middle of the night and told him he was in despair and hoped he would take the rent, but at the same time issue a writ against him in case he should be intimidated. Why, there were sneaks everywhere, and these were simply specimens of the men who run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. He was exceedingly surprised at the right hon. Gentleman making any point of the 836 persons who were alleged to have been intimidated, because his argument was that the entire Irish nation was intimidated by the National League, and not 836 persons merely. A distinction had been drawn in those cases between partially and wholly Boycotted cases. What was the difference? Did the latter mean exclusive dealing, and the former that if a man went into a shop and asked for six eggs he was only given three? He fully admitted that Boycotting would be wrong in a country such as England, where the laws had the sanction of the people; but in a country like Ireland, where alien law existed, he was not sure that he would consider it wrong on the part of Irishmen to refuse to deal with a man who was to all intents and purposes the enemy of his country. He happened to be in the North of Italy when the Austrians were there, and habitual Boycotting went on in Milan and Venice, and elsewhere. The Austrian officers would go to one *café* and the Italians to another; and if an Austrian officer went into a *café* which was frequented by the Italians, the latter would rise *en masse* and go out. This, however, was simply accepted by the Austrians as the natural consequence of a foreign domination. But to look nearer home, what was the Primrose League but a gigantic religious, political, and social Boycotting association? If he were to cite cases of Boycotting by the Primrose League, he should have to go on till 12 o'clock at night. Again, were not Dissenters habitually Boycotted in this country? [*Cries of* "No!"] Would the hon. Gentleman who cried "No" assert that there was no landlord of the Established Church who did not refuse to let his farm to a man simply because he was a Wesleyan? What did the Prime Minister himself do? He refused to give a decent, respectable site for a Nonconformist place of worship in Hatfield. Boycotting, moreover, was a very ancient institution. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had not that veneration for the ancient Hebrew race that he himself had. But he would point out to those who did respect that race that they were the first Boycotters on record. He would call their attention to the text, "For the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans." But was it not a little ridiculous of a Cabinet, with Lord Salisbury at its head, to ask the House to pass a Bill in order to put down Boycotting in Ireland, when the noble Lord himself went out of his way at Newport to explain that no Boycotting or intimidation could be put down by any possible Bill? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary had said that the National League was a secret association which dealt with dagger and dynamite; and, according to the right hon. Gentleman, people were forced to join it by fear, and there was at the head of it a set of desperate men who desired separation. One would suppose that the Government regarded the National League as a species of Vehmgericht, dreaded and hated by everybody in Ireland. What was the National League? Why, it was the entire Irish nation; it was the unauthorized Parliament of Ireland—it was not a secret society, and its objects were to protect tenants from the extortion of rack-rents, and to obtain the Home Rule which hon. Gentlemen opposite were so fond of denouncing. Sir Redvers Buller himself had stated that the people looked up to the League, because it alone protected them. If they did away with the National League, secret societies would undoubtedly spring up and take its place; and, regret it as they might, there was no question that there would be outrages. His authority for that statement was the right hon. Member for ——. No; his authority was a Gentleman of the name of John Bright. He was not alluding to the right hon. Gentleman, for he was afraid the old John Bright had entirely disappeared. This was what John Bright had said—

> "The first thing that ever called my attention to the state of Ireland was reading an account of one of these outrages. I thought of it for a moment, but the truth struck me at once, and all I have ever seen since confirms it. When law refuses its duty, when Government denies the right of the people, when competition is so fierce for the little land that the monopolists grant to cultivators in Ireland, when, in fact, millions are struggling for the potato—then people are driven back from law and from the usages of civilization to that which is termed the law of nature, and, if not of the strongest, of the law of the vindictive; and in this case the people of Ireland believe, to my certain knowledge, that it is only by these acts of vengeance, periodically committed, that they can hold in suspense the arm of the proprietor, of the landlord, and of the agent, who, in many cases, would, if he dared, exterminate them."

The case for coercion had entirely failed. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite had a sense that they were somewhat feeble men, and they wanted to posture as firm men. It was essentially a Party move. The Government would coerce those who opposed them in England if they dared. Turning to the provisions of this iniquitous Bill, and particularly to the clause changing the venue to England in certain cases, did the Government really suppose that if they picked up some miserable Irishman, and brought him over to London to be tried, they would thereby increase the love and affection of Ireland towards England? If hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite would take the trouble to refer to their history, they would find that Lord North, at the time of the American Rebellion, proposed that Americans should be brought over to England and tried by jury, a proposal which was denounced by Burke as one of the most monstrous that the mind of man could conceive. It was difficult to say whether the clause referred to was more atrocious or absurd. It was an outrage on trial by jury; it would be infinitely better to do away with trial by jury. Why were they going to bring over the witnesses and the whole Irish Bar to England? Why do the Government not send the jury over to Ireland? The Bill also provides that the minor offences, of which his hon. Friends from Ireland were habitually guilty, were to be tried by two Resident Magistrates, the punishment accorded being six months' hard labour. What were those minor offences? They were specified in the Whiteboy Acts, and included among them assemblies carrying unusual badges. [An hon. MEMBER: The Primrose League.] He did not know whether there were branches of the Primrose League in Ireland; but there were certainly Orange Lodges, which had badges; and it was possible that they too would suffer. The Acts also dealt with such an offence as persons by drums and music promoting an unlawful meeting; but here was the most remarkable provision—"requiring by any written or printed document to do or not to do"—what?—"any act." That was a net which nothing could escape. Now, who were the gentlemen who were to try persons guilty of those minor offences? They knew what the unpaid magistracy was in this country. They knew perfectly well that the unpaid magistrates in England were "saints in heaven" compared with the magistracy in Ireland. These gentlemen were not lawyers; they had received no legal education of any kind. They were, in some cases, the "ne'er-do-wells" of their family, and half-pay officers, whom it was thought ought to be provided for; cousins of noble Lords, and landlords sent over to Ireland to be provided for. He asked the House to observe on what conditions they held their office, for certainly never were independent men in such a subservient position to a Government before, and never were men called upon to exercise those functions from which partizanship and political feeling ought to be eliminated placed in such a position. There were Acts passed in this reign which provided that the Lord Lieutenant might appoint Stipendiary Magistrates at pleasure, to be dismissed or removed at pleasure. "Their pension is to depend on the Chief Secretary's certificate of diligent and faithful service." The Lord Lieutenant might raise their classification and salary, and grant them special sums for allowances. They would, therefore, have these worthy gentlemen competing for those allowances and for those pensions, and the plea would be—"I have sent to prison more decent men than any of my Resident Magistrate friends." He (Mr. Labouchere) really believed that an Irish Nationalist would have as little chance before two Resident Magistrates in Ireland as a Christian in the earliest ages of Christianity had before the two magistrates of Judæa, Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas. The Chief Secretary made a species of boast that his Bill would not affect the Press. But he contended that if the Bill were passed the Press would be at the mercy of the Government, and the Press of Ireland would be subject to such an Act as had never yet been passed in the most despotic Government in the world. Even in Russia a newspaper had three warnings before it was suppressed. In France, under Napoleon, a newspaper had also three warnings; but there was no provision contained in the codes of these Governments comparable with the likelihood of a newspaper being proceeded against under this Bill on the ground that it had published a report of a meeting or a resolution passed at a meeting. But he should like to know how the Government were going to distinguish between English and Irish newspapers? How were they going to deal with an incitement to Boycott published in an English newspaper circulated in Ireland? The speeches of hon. Members from Ireland delivered in the House would be published in the papers, and was the House to understand that the Press would be prosecuted for publishing those speeches? Were the speeches to be reported in the English Press and not in the Irish Press? They were told that this Bill was to last for ever. Juries were to be suppressed, the Press was to be gagged, the liberties of men were to be subject to the will of two wretched Resident Magistrates, and all this for ever. The Government would probably say that the Bill might be abrogated. But supposing the country, as he had no doubt it would, were to return a majority at the next Election in favour of the Liberal Party. In order to put an end to the Bill, it must be remembered that the repealing measure has not only to pass the House of Commons, but the House of Lords as well. Who were the Members of that House? They were the subservient political slaves of the Prime Minister. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and* "Order!"]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not treating the other branch of the Legislature with proper courtesy, a courtesy always due from one House to the other. [*Cries of* "Withdraw!"]

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he had not the slightest intention of withdrawing. [*Renewed cries of* "Withdraw!"] The majority of the Upper House, of whom he spoke with the greatest respect, was entirely in the hands of Lord Salisbury. He did not suppose that any hon. Gentleman opposite would deny that. On the contrary, they were glad it was the case. Lord Salisbury had stated that there ought to be a firm Government—that was to say, a Coercion Government—for 20 years in Ireland. The noble Lord was the master in the other House, and if this Bill were passed it could only be abrogated by the consent of the Upper House; and if Lord Salisbury acted on his views they would have this Bill for 20 years at least. The Government were also going to take powers to suppress any association in Ireland that might promote or encourage interference with the administration of the law. Of course, this provision was aimed at the National League. He wanted to know who was to be the Judge, and who was going to suppress it? Why, Lord Londonderry. It was simply scandalous to say that any association which, in the opinion of Lord Londonderry, promoted or encouraged interference with the administration of the law—that was to say, his administration—was to be suppressed by his *fiat*. The House was told that there was a conspiracy in Ireland. Why, the conspiracy was here, and the conspirators were here. The conspirators were the landlords, the men of class and privilege, who were always the bitter and persistent enemies of the people. These Irish conspirators, as they were called, were defending the rights of their country, defending the poor man against the rich man in Ireland. They were doing their best to get fair rents; they were doing their best not to separate from this country, but to obtain those rights in regard to self-government which the Leaders of the Liberal Party have asserted in this country with the full assent of the Liberal Party. It was strange that there should be men who called themselves Liberals who absolutely went with the Tories in regard to this Bill. The noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) had not yet spoken in this debate; but he would probably condemn in silence that to which he gave the support of his vote. In a speech delivered outside the House, however, the noble Marquess had laid down what he thought was a fair proposition, that those who declined the proposals of the late Government with regard to Ireland were bound to find some mode by which Ireland would really be governed by the British Government. The noble Marquess was surprised "at any attempt being made to throw on the Unionists the responsibility for coercion." The attempt was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. The noble Marquess denied the responsibility, and, having done so, he went on to ask what would be their responsibility if the Bill were rejected. Consequently, if the Bill were passed by his vote, there was no responsibility; but if the Bill were thrown out by the noble Marquess, then there would be responsibility. Surely this was a distinction without a difference. He looked back a little in the speech to see what was the meaning of it and he found it. The noble Marquess said—"We hold the balance of power in the House of Commons;" and then his argument came to this—that as Mr. Parnell's Amendment was a vote of Want of Confidence in the Government they were forced to vote against it. If they voted for coercion they were not responsible; but they were responsible because they made them vote for coercion because they voted for Home Rule. They had the effrontery to vote in favour of want of confidence. The noble Marquess seemed to think this a sort of crime. Well, they did not recognize that the Conservatives should be in Office, and the noble Marquess could not shake off any responsibility for his vote. If the noble Marquess voted for coercion he must take the responsibility for it. He turned next to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), and what was his argument? That right hon. Gentleman adopted another line of argument. He seemed to think that if they had coercion they must have remedial measures, and if they had remedial measures they must have coercion. The Radical Party did not accept that. They held that if the remedial measures were sound coercion would be unnecessary. It appeared from the organs in the Press of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, that he gave a reluctant consent to the Coercion Acts when he was a Member of the Gladstone Government. Quite the reverse. He told them the other night that he voted for two Coercion Bills, and that he was perfectly ready to have voted for a third. Finding that he could not sell his goods to the Liberals, he went over to the Tories, and bargained with them to support coercion if they would take up with his remedial ideas. What the right hon. Member for West Birmingham wanted was to be legislator for Ireland. He did not care about coercion one way or the other so that his miserable vanity was satisfied. He would be content if he could only say that he had had a finger in the Tory pie. As to the Whigs, he need not say much about them. But let any Radical distinctly understand that if he did vote in favour of this Bill the Radicals would never forgive him. Hon. Gentlemen opposite would, of course, receive such a Radical with open arms. But he would be a Radical no longer. The door of repentance had been open long enough. It was time that it should be understood that it was closed in the face of every Radical who on this occasion voted with a Conservative Government. He had not the slightest doubt that this Bill would pass; but by what sort of a majority? It would not pass by the votes of hon. Gentlemen opposite. What did Sir Robert Peel say about this sort of majority? He said, speaking on the first reading of the Coercion Bill in 1846—

> "A Government ought to have a natural support. A Conservative Government should be supported by Conservative votes. Support from the compassion of its enemies, or even from the personal friendly feelings of those who ought on public principles to oppose a Government, is a hollow and not a creditable support."

That was the kind of support on which hon. Gentlemen opposite relied for carrying this Bill. Relying on this support, they were confident of carrying it. The Liberal Party would resist this Bill to the last. His opinion was that coercion ought to be carried by coercion. It was the duty of Liberals at every stage of this Bill to contest its provisions. He knew perfectly well that the people were with them. The reaction had already commenced. He believed this was the very last effort of class against class. It was a struggle of the poor against the rich. It was a struggle between plutocrats and landlord Party on the one side, and the men who occupied the land, and who asked for a fair share of the fruits of the soil, on the other. It was a struggle between the system of government for the people, and by the people, and the system of government based upon the coercion of the people. The English democrats would stand by the democrats of Ireland, and would fight shoulder to shoulder with them, for they knew that if this Bill were allowed full scope it would be their turn next. They knew, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had said, that "the ebbing tide is with you, and the flowing tide is with us." For his part, though he regretted and deplored this Bill, he had, at least, this consolation—that if it were passed and administered in Ireland, it would advance more than anything in recent years the cause of Home Rule.

Mr. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central) said, the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) began his speech by saying the *onus probandi* in support of a Coercion Bill lay with the Government, and that that was all the more the case because the presumption was against the success of any Coercion Bill. He (Mr. G. W. Balfour) ventured to dispute that proposition. He thought, on the contrary, the many Coercion Bills passed during the present century, and also before the present century, had succeeded in their object. They had enabled the Government, at the time, to preserve law and order which did not exist when those Bills were passed. They were necessary, and they did their work, and no Coercion Bill more than Lord Spencer's Act. He would admit, however, that that Act had one great fault which the present Bill had not. The Act of 1882 was limited in time, whereas the provisions of the present Bill, if passed, would remain in force until repealed. The hon. Member for Northampton went on to use the argument which they had heard most frequently from Benches opposite — that there was no Parliamentary case to be drawn from statistics in favour of the Bill. That argument had been used often in the House, and was certain to be used again and again in the country; and he (Mr. G. W. Balfour) thought it was necessary that they should insist on the answer to it, with as much persistence as hon. Gentlemen opposite showed in putting it forward. The Conservatives held there was a complete answer to that argument. The crime with which the Government had a difficulty in dealing was principally agrarian; and it was agrarian crime that formed the sanction of the unwritten law of the National League. Boycotting and outrages were the punishments of the National League — the means by which that League enforced its decrees. When punishment was rare, it might be because the law was supreme, or because the law was powerless; and if agrarian crime was comparatively rare in Ireland now, it only proved that the law of the National League was supreme, while at the same time the impunity of crime in Ireland proved that the Government were powerless. They must not only look at rarity of crime, but also at the impunity of crime; and if they took those two things together, he believed the Government had an amply sufficient case for introducing the Bill, and the House and the country for supporting it. He did not deny, in a certain sense, that, as the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Labouchere) had said, the National League had been endeavouring to suppress crime; for he believed that it had been making efforts to suppress the grosser kinds of crime. But why was that? He presumed that not even the National League desired to see crime in Ireland for the sake of crime. The grosser kinds of crime were now useless and, indeed, prejudicial to them, and that was the reason why these crimes were comparatively few in number. The action of the League in this matter had received the approval of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who acknowledged that it was owing to the alliance between the League and the Liberal Party that crimes were not more numerous. He (Mr. G. W. Balfour) would not deny the truth of that statement; but he confessed that it did not give him any satisfaction. It reminded him too much of that ill-omened transaction which went by the name of "the Kilmainham Treaty," and of the promise of Captain O'Shea to the late Mr. Forster, that the conspiracy which had been used to get up crime and outrages would be used to put them down. It would be a different matter if this alliance was likely to lead to any change in the character of the Nationalist Party, but he saw no such prospect. The National League, as the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) had said, still held the throttle valves of crime, and the moment it became once more expedient to use crime, he (Mr. G. W. Balfour) was persuaded that the League would not hold its hand. This alliance could only, then, result in the further demoralization of the country, and increase the difficulties of governing it. The National League had a difficult part to play; but it had played it skilfully and well. On the one hand, it was necessary that they should not strain their relations too far with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian; and it was requisite, therefore, that the methods which formed the sanction of their unwritten law should not be too open and pronounced. On the other hand, there was also the object to be accomplished of making the government of Ireland impossible. He was bound to admit that in the pursuit of this double purpose they had exhibited considerable skill. The extract read by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) from a speech of the hon. Member for Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond) was so suggestive that he would make no apology for using it again. That hon. Member, speaking on December 11th, said—

"Home Rule was defeated at the last Election in Great Britain, and I say advisedly that if in

> the face of that defeat the Tories had been able to rule Ireland with the ordinary law, the result would have been in England and Scotland to throw back our cause perhaps for a generation, and to give the lie direct to the prophecy of Mr. Gladstone. We have achieved a victory without breaking any law or committing any single outrage. Now at a time when outrages are fewer in Ireland than during the last five years, according to the admission of the Government itself, we have been able to force the Government to give up the ordinary law and to have recourse again to coercion."

That extract was full of significance. It revealed the whole secret of the policy of the National League. In his (Mr. G. W. Balfour's) opinion, the remark that the League had—

> "Achieved a victory without breaking any law, or committing any single outrage,"

did not reduce the significance of the extract. No doubt the hon. Gentleman's view of the crime might differ from his, and the hon. Gentleman might consider the Plan of Campaign legal and Boycotting no crime. What he wished to point out was that the comparative absence of crime, so far as it could be ascribed to the National League, was not the result of a recognition by its members that crime was an unjustifiable way of obtaining their political ends, but simply, and solely, because they had thought it necessary to suppress outrages for the moment in order to maintain the alliance with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his Party. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman, in lending himself to this policy, had given the Government cause of complaint. The right hon. Gentleman was perfectly within his rights in opposing the Bill, but not in obstructing it by all means in his power. The right hon. Gentleman, at the last Election, said the issue was between coercion and Home Rule. The Conservatives did not accept that as a true statement of the alternative; because they did not think that coercion, pure and simple, at all represented their policy. But having himself stated that coercion was the only alternative to his policy, the right hon. Gentleman had no right to introduce every obstacle, and in to use every means—even the most questionable—to prevent the Government carrying out that policy. Four days were spent last week in what was practically a preliminary first reading debate, and now four days more had been spent on the first reading. Last week the discussion turned principally on the question of rents. Now it had taken a wider range; but, in every case, the conclusion which Members of the Opposition came to was, that coercion was not the right remedy for Ireland at all, and that they ought to try remedial measures. Had remedial measures which had been passed during the last seven years been so successful that they could depend absolutely and exclusively upon them now? They must acknowledge that the right hon. Gentleman's remedial measures had not produced the results expected of them. The Act of 1881 like that of 1870 was heralded with the promise of a Millennium to follow. The Millennium had never followed, and why? The right hon. Gentleman had told them that they were attacking the symptoms and not the causes of Irish discontent. If that had been said about the Coercion Acts passed before 1870, he (Mr. G. W. Balfour) thought there would have been a great deal of truth in it. Those Acts succeeded as far as they went; but they certainly did not go in the way to the root of the evil. But, within the last 10 years a very great change had come over the whole Irish Question, and he did not think that it could be said of the Act of 1882, or of the present Crimes Bill, that they were not directed against causes as well as against symptoms. The change in the Irish Question was this—that, for the first time in the history of the Home Rule agitation—for the first time since the Union—the Nationalist Party had linked itself with the claims of the peasantry. Those claims, up to a certain point, were just; but it was not merely the just claims which the National League depended upon to obtain their political ends. They appealed to the unjust greed and cupidity of the peasantry. Very well. How did the right hon. Gentleman opposite propose, in 1882, to deal with that state of things? The right hon. Gentleman dealt with that not merely by remedial measures, but also by a measure of coercion, which sought to destroy the organization which was making satisfactory working of the remedial measures impossible. Unfortunately, two great mistakes were committed. In the first place, the solution of the Land Question proposed and carried out in 1881 had not been a satisfactory one, or one which could be a final settlement of the question. Consequently that measure must now be supplemented by another dealing more radically and more satisfactorily with the Land Question. The second mistake was one which he would allow was committed by the Conservative Government, in ever allowing the Crimes Act to lapse. If that Act could have been maintained they would not now have been in their present difficulties, or have had to come to Parliament to ask for further powers. The duty of the Government was to adopt the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1882—namely, to accompany remedial measures with a measure for the restoration of law and order. The National League intended to make government in Ireland impossible, if it could; it was, therefore, really a duel to the death between law on the one hand, and the National League on the other. Everything was hazarded upon that throw. He believed that in the struggle upon which they were now entering, law would be victorious; and that nothing would be left to the official Opposition, except the shame of having allowed themselves to be the accomplices in the attempt of the National League to secure Home Rule at the price of the demoralization of the whole Irish people. What was called the wild justice of revenge was bad enough. But what happened when it ceased to be wild? When it was put under the management of a political association, it became an organized and systematic tyranny. It was impossible to confine a movement of this kind to the relations between landlord and tenant, or between tenant and tenant. It would spread to every relation of life. The present movement was already doing so. It was interfering, not merely between landlord and tenant, but between creditor and debtor, to the repudiation of all debts; and it had been pressed into the service of envy, malice, and all the basest passions of mankind. It was easy enough to call up the spirit of disorder; but it was not so easy to allay it, and we should not be able to check the growth of the spirit, except by some measure such as that which the Government were seeking to introduce. Unless there was some external pressure of the kind, the movement would spread until it loosened all the ties which bind society together which go to make up what is called civilization. He sincerely trusted that, notwithstanding all the obstacles and difficulties which were threatened to be interposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, the Government would persevere with the Bill. The state of Ireland demanded that they should persevere, and public opinion demanded it also, and he trusted they would press forward their measure with all the expedition the Forms of the House enabled them to command.

Mr. WAYMAN (York, W.R., Elland) said, he should not be satisfied to give a silent vote in opposition to this Bill, and he knew that the electors of the Elland Division of Yorkshire, who had sent him there, would desire that he should state to the House how hateful a thing this measure was in their eyes. He had listened, with very great attention, to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) on Monday night, and he must say that he was greatly surprised at the feebleness and flimsiness of the reasons which the right hon. Gentleman urged for applying a code of such tremendous severity to the people of Ireland. He regarded the Bill as a measure which, if passed, would be an outrage on Ireland, and an insult to the people of England. It might, perhaps, have the effect of driving into holes and corners certain agitators who had made themselves inconveniently troublesome to the authorities; but it would not prevent them making secret channels of their own, through which they might exercise their influence, which would probably be ten times more dangerous to society and law and order than it was now. He did not assert that the situation in Ireland was as satisfactory as they would like it to be; but they had seen a far worse state of things there than now existed, and his own impression was that it would have been a very great deal better to-day than it was, but for the unwisdom of the Government last autumn in refusing to have anything whatever to do with the Tenants' Relief Bill of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). That hon. Gentleman, evidently having an accurate knowledge of the facts with regard to Ireland, came to the House with a correct description of the situation in that country, and proposed a remedy for the condition of things then prevailing which, if it had been applied, would have prevented the necessity for any application at that moment for such a measure as was before the House. It seemed that an opinion had prevailed in the House that Ireland should not be ruled according to her own ideas, but must be governed according to English ideas; and, therefore, when the hon. Member for Cork submitted his Bill, they said—"We will have nothing whatever to do with it. We do not believe in your description of the state of the country, and we do not believe in your remedy." Indeed, the Government and their supporters said, that so far from the description being correct, there was a great deal more money being spent in whisky and more money in the Savings Banks than there had been before. They therefore concluded that Ireland was in a tolerably good condition; and he heard some hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side talk as if a new era had dawned upon Ireland, and that it was entering upon a career of agricultural prosperity which would put everything right in a short time. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Gibson) stated, among other things, that the recent prices of wool had risen 60 per cent. He (Mr. Wayman) had himself been engaged in the wool trade all his life, and he ought to know something about it, and he was very much surprised at the statement, which would not have been made by the hon. and learned Gentleman if he had known anything of what he was talking about. The fact was that English and Irish wool had not risen more than 20 per cent, and to the knowledge of the trade, that increase had no element of permanence in it, as it resulted rather from speculation than from any increased demand. The price had since gone back, and was not now more than 10 per cent in addition to the lowest ruling price during the worst period of depression through which we had recently passed. That showed what erroneous opinions prevailed in regard to Ireland; and he was convinced that it would have been infinitely better if the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork had been acted upon. If it had been adopted, there would have been no need for the "Plan of Campaign." He believed that the Bill was directed more against the Plan of Campaign than anything else, and he agreed with the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) in thinking that, so far from deserving all the reprobation which had been poured upon it, that Plan had done a very great deal of good in Ireland. He did not say it was legal and ought to be defended; but it had been absolutely necessary, and, but for it, there would have been worse difficulties in Ireland than at present existed. If the Bill passed, he thought that it would not be very long before the Government now in power found out the great mistake it had made. He could only say that he hoped that it would be opposed at every step of its progress, and in every way that the Forms of the House would permit.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, he felt it was highly necessary, on behalf of the constituency which he represented, which was one of those Northern constituencies said to be loyal to Castle rule, to express the absolute repugnance with which the people of the North of Ireland regard the Coercion Bill of the Government. It appeared to him that the principal thing the Bill, if passed, would do in Ireland, was to revive the old and hateful contests and struggles between Protestants and Catholics in the North. In the constituency he represented there were 86 magistrates; and of these, 82 were Protestant gentlemen, representing, to a great extent, the Orange Institution, and carrying out, whenever they had the opportunity, the behests and wishes of the Institution. Yet it was proposed by this Bill to place in the hands of Resident Magistrates in the North of Ireland the power of sending a man to prison for six months. But it was well known that, with a few exceptions, Resident Magistrates in the North of Ireland made use of their authority in a very unfair manner towards the Catholics. It was almost a humiliation for an Irish Member to come there, and have to stand up in defence of the liberties of his country. ["Oh, oh!"] He did not wish to say anything offensive of hon. Members of the House. He did not wish to deny the right of hon. Members opposite to act on their convictions; but what was maddening to an Irish Member was to have to listen, day after day, to the gross ignorance of the affairs of Ireland shown by Gentlemen who had the power of legislating for Ireland. Gentlemen derived their knowledge of the country from the columns of *The Times*, *The Observer*, or some Tory paper which was engaged in raking up every petty outrage which occurred throughout the country as evidence of the necessity for repressive measures, and which had been proved, over and over again, to have lied, while they ignored the information given by the 85 Members from Ireland. What did the Chief Secretary for Ireland know about Ireland? He went to Ireland absolutely without any knowledge of the country, and he spoke of Ireland now absolutely without information. What would Englishmen say if the case were reversed, and Irishmen, without any knowledge of England, came to govern this country? It appeared that we were to have remedial legislation after the Coercion Bill was passed. In 1881, the Liberal Government entered upon a course which proved disastrous, and the present Government were entering upon the same course. In 1881, Mr. Forster made a Coercion Act precede the Land Act. He threw priests and 1,000 of the leaders of the people into gaol, and drove the people themselves to the verge of madness, and almost into a state of rebellion. Could they be surprised, therefore, that the Irish people did not receive the Land Act of 1881 in a cheerful and grateful spirit? In the same way, the land proposals which had that evening been introduced into the House of Lords would also fail. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had been unable to make out a case for coercion by statistics of crime, simply because there had been no year since the Union in which crime had been less in amount and less serious in character in Ireland than in the past year. It had been said, however, that that hateful measure had been introduced to put down Boycotting in Ireland, and not because of the extent of crime. His (Mr. Redmond's) reply to that was, that that or any other Government would find it impossible to put down Boycotting by Act of Parliament, so long as the landlords were permitted to worry and fleece the people as they were now doing. The people of Ireland had learnt the system of Boycotting so thoroughly that it was unnecessary to incite them to it, and the only way of putting it down was to remove the cause by taking from the landlords the power they now had of evicting people for the non-payment of rents, which even the evidence given before the Cowper Commission proved to be unjust and unfair. They had been told that the people of Ireland were terrorized into joining the National League. He never heard such a silly statement. The law of the League was the law of the land only and entirely because it was freely and voluntarily supported by every section and class of the people throughout the country. The Government well knew that the people of all classes and all conditions and all religions in Ireland had united in joining the National League. It was, therefore, a very poor assertion for the Government to make without proof, and it would be a long time before the Government could make good that assertion by proof. In the whole of Ireland there could not be found half-a-dozen men outside the landlord classes, who always hungered for their rents, who would stand up and attempt to expose what they (the Government) called the terror of the National League in Ireland. There was only one terror to the people of Ireland, and that was the British Government; and the terror which the National League was said to hold over the people would continue in Ireland as long as that House and the Government of that House attempted to rule the Irish people contrary to their wishes and opinions. Sir Redvers Buller had destroyed the assertion of the Government by declaring that the Land League had been the salvation of the people. The terrorism which existed in Ireland was that exercised by the landlords, who had the power to evict and grind the people down. There was no terrorism, except that exercised in those parts of Ireland where the authorities of Castle rule might with impunity trample on the people as they did before the National League came to save the South and West. This Coercion Bill was not directed against crime—there was no crime in Ireland—but it was directed against a political Party whose demand for Home Rule was too strong to be resisted by Constitutional means. As to the allegation that the jury system had broken down in Ireland, he (Mr. Redmond) emphatically denied that juries had failed to convict in cases of ordinary crime; and, on this ground also, the Chief Secretary for Ireland had failed to make out a case for the Bill. He challenged the right hon. Gentleman to lay on the Table of the House four cases where juries in Ireland had refused to convict in ordinary cases where the evidence was clear. There was not a place in the world where the murderer, the thief, or the common malefactor would be more speedily brought to justice than in Ireland. In those cases where no conviction had been obtained, there had been something between the landlord and the tenant to show to the minds of those peasant jurymen that they were not trying a man who was sinning alone for the sake of sin, but they were trying a man who, rightly or wrongly, had been endeavouring to stand by the people against the harsh exactions of the evictor and exterminator in Ireland. If the Government put an end to that state of things by bringing in a comprehensive measure that would recognize the rights of the tenants in the soil, give them fair justice, and offer them land at a fair price, it would, he believed, be found that Boycotting and the failure of the jury system would come to an end; but if, instead of getting a measure of that kind, the Government persisted in passing the Bill before the House, he believed, though he did not wish to see it, that crime would occur in Ireland, that outrage would redouble there. The Irish Members had been accused of being outrage mongers; but he would only repeat what he had so often stated before, that they deplored crime and outrage. But still more than crime and outrage did they deplore and condemn the cause of crime and outrage; and he believed, in his heart, if the Coercion Bill was passed, if trial by jury was abolished in Ireland, and men dragged to trial before Englishmen who knew nothing of the circumstances of the case, but would take the word of the base informer—if they did that he believed, as he had said, that crime would occur in Ireland, outrages would double in Ireland, and, moreover, he believed that when crimes did occur and when outrages redoubled, the Government would be satisfied, for he considered that that was what they wanted the Irish people to do. There was not the slightest justification for the measure. He believed it was intended to goad the people on to crime and outrage in Ireland, so that the Tory Party, who saw the cause of Home Rule was advancing in rapid strides, might retain their positions and salaries. The Government saw that the English people were sympathetic with the Irish people, and they were endeavouring to rouse the prejudices of the former nation, so that the immaculate Members of the Ministry might continue to act on the Front Bench. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), when he became Leader of the agitation for Home Rule, found the people despairing of obtaining anything for Ireland in that House; but he weaned them from other methods which he knew would not be successful—he taught them once more to look to Parliament for the restitution of Ireland's rights, and the whole crop which the hon. Member for Cork had sown in Ireland of peace, of goodwill, of calmness, and patience, had borne fruit in the existence of the Party of which he (Mr. Redmond) was a Member, composed of Constitutionally-elected Representatives of the Irish people. If the Bill was passed and was followed by bloodshed in Ireland, history would record that the guilt and shame lay, not on the brows of the Representatives of the people, who resisted it, but on the brows of the present rulers of Ireland — rulers of two or three weeks, who had just come from Universities, and thought they could rule Ireland, of which they knew nothing whatever—those Gentlemen who carried a Bill the only effect of which could be to keep open the old sores between England and Ireland. Coercion Bills had invariably caused crime, as had been strikingly shown at the time of the imprisonment of the hon. Member for Cork. But, in fact, there was little crime in Ireland at the present time, and it was pretended that this Bill was justified on the ground that it would prevent crime. But, as Lord Macaulay had said, to punish a man because you inferred from the nature of some of his doctrines, or the conduct of his associates, that he was going to commit some offence was persecution, and in every case wicked and foolish. The Government might for a time succeed in stifling the voice of the Irish people — they might succeed in driving discontent under the surface; but they would find the Irish people in the future, as they had found them in the past, firm and determined in their desire never to relinquish their National birthright, undaunted by the struggles and exertions they had passed through, and determined to carry on the war, as their fathers had carried it on before them, until it was out of the power of any English fop in the guise of a British Minister to trample on the rights of their country.

MR. KING (Hull, Central): I do not intend, Sir, to take up the time of the House with a speech; but it is necessary that I should ask the indulgence of hon. Members while I explain the vote I am about to give. I, Sir, was one of those, like the Liberal Unionists to whom the noble Lord the Member for the Rossendale Division of Lancashire referred in his speech of Wednesday, who had hoped and believed, too sanguinely it seems, that the era of Coercion Bills for Ireland had passed. In 1885 things had assumed a rosy hue. The ghastly pallor of the Gladstone-Spencer *régime* had given way to the blushing sentiment of a Carnarvon wooing, smiled on by the hon. Member for Cork and the Archbishop of Ireland. At that time we were encouraged by our Leaders to believe that a new era had dawned; that there was to be conciliation on one side and abstention from crime and disorder on the other. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington described the situation on the 20th November, 1885, in these words—

> "We undertook to govern Ireland without those abridgements of the liberty which Mr. Gladstone had found necessary. Up to the present time the experiment has been found strikingly successful."

Well, Sir, in common I believe with many hon. Members who sit on this side, I not only felt a natural repugnance to what is commonly called coercion, but I hoped that the call for any exceptional legislation had passed; and I formed a firm resolution that I could not, and would not, be a party to the revival of those terribly energetic measures which Lord Spencer was sent over to Ireland by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—the present distinguished Leader of the Home Rule Party—to carry out. Those measures might indeed be called "coercion." They were, Sir, described by the hon. Member for Cork in these terms—

> "Under this system juries were packed with a shamelessness unprecedented even in Liberal Administrations. Twelve hundred men were imprisoned without trial. Ladies were convicted under an obsolete Act; and, for a period, every utterance of the popular Press and of the popular meeting was as completely suppressed as if Ireland were Poland."

Well, Sir, that is a description by an expert of Liberal coercion; and, believing as we did, that those severe measures, to which the present proposals are milk and water, ought not to be applied to a country which, it was admitted and is admitted on this side by Lord Salisbury himself, is suffering from grievances which he says demand large and far-reaching remedies; believing that we made declarations for our decided repugnance to legislation of that extreme character. At the same time, Sir, I, for one, and I believe others, who that way warned the Irish people that they ought, in continuing to agitate for a redress of grievances, to keep strictly within the bounds of legality—I say, Sir, it was not to be supposed for a moment that by such declarations as he made we ever intended to give a free hand, or pledge ourselves to grant unlimited scope to crime, to disorder, to defiance of the law, and to conspiracy against the Constitutional unity of these Realms. If there were pledges, it could not be supposed that they were all on one side. To have said that if crime and disloyalty broke out in Ireland they were not to be put down by all the resources of civilization would have been so absurd that any man who committed himself to such a proposition would have been rejected by the common sense of any community. Therefore, Sir, in view of the very grave circumstances which have arisen since those declarations were made, I confess I do not see the aptness of the vindictive, the viperish remark which fell from the right hon. Member for Newcastle in his veiled speech last night. Referring to some Conservative Members, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Some of their own Party, even in this Parliament—and I am going to remind them of this when the time comes—have said that there ought to be no increased stringency of criminal procedure in Ireland, unless it is also extended to England."

It is absolutely out of the question; and therefore, of those Gentlemen who won their election in London and elsewhere on the ground that they were going to deal with Ireland exactly as they would deal with England, their constituents will have a right—and a right I think they will exercise—to call upon them when the time come to give an account of their want of fidelity to the pledges that won them the elections. I will not, Sir, make any reflection on the exquisite absurdity of the charges of inconsistency or tergiversation addressed to this side of the House from the Front Opposition Bench; but I will simply recall those new facts which have happened since such declarations were made by hon. Members which put a wholly different complexion on the situation, and which, Sir, I venture here to say, boldly, amply, and completely justify the hon. Member in re-considering his position at the present time. Well, Sir, at the time those declarations were made what was the situation? The agitation for Home Rule had not assumed any serious or dangerous aspect. No responsible statesman in this country committed himself openly to a Separatist policy, though it now appears that it had been germinating in the brain of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian for many years. Yes, sir, it was locked up in that brain by his own confession whilst he was applying those very measures described by the hon. Member for Cork in such indignant terms. But, now, Sir, it is all altered. Those Benches opposite are filled, as they ought to be, with Members of the Separatist Party led by English Leaders, and the country has been roused up to defend the unity of the Three Kingdoms. The agitation in Ireland has ceased to be an agitation for the mere redress of grievances—grievances which I admit ought to be remedied, and must be remedied, as Lord Salisbury has said, by "far-reaching" and by generous legislation. I can only say if they are not—if a prompt and generous attempt is not made to redress those grievances, the Government may expect that a number of hon. Members on this side will refuse to support them. Well, Sir, I say the agitation has ceased to be a mere agitation for the redress of grievances, and has become a movement which gravely imperils the authority of the Government and the stability of the Realm. And not only that, Sir, but doctrines have been preached from the Front Opposition Bench which strike at the fundamental principles of social and political order. The right hon. Gentlemen have justified resistance to and defiance of laws passed by the House, a free Representative Assembly, on the ground that the laws are unjust. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, said—

> "If it be a law which is just, it is the duty of civilized society to enforce that law; but if it be a law which works injustice,"

—and by the way, Sir, the income tax works injustice every day—

> "it is not the first duty of civilized society to enforce that law."

Well, Sir, who is to decide whether the laws are just or unjust, the people who make the law or the people who break the law? I remember the right hon. Gentleman said that it was the duty of civilized society to alter all that. I entirely concur that it is the duty of civilized society to alter it; but as I said, who is to decide what law is just and what law is unjust? Is it the men who make the laws or the men who break them? It is the utterance of such subversive doctrines as that from the Leaders of a powerful Party and their support of a Separatist policy constitute a situation of such gravity that hon. Members on this side have no alternative but to rally to the support of the Government which is engaged in maintaining the law, the Constitution, and the Union. Those are the reasons, Sir, by which I, for one, find myself driven with a reluctance—I might say a repugnance which words cannot qualify—to vote for the first reading of this Bill. But, Sir, I must add that I await with some anxiety the Bill itself. I voted for "Urgency" because the Government demanded it, on its responsibility. I shall vote for the first reading of the Bill; but I reserve to myself absolute freedom of action in regard to its details, and especially with regard to that provision which has been sketched out for bringing Irish prisoners over to England for trial at the Old Bailey. Let me add one word more. There can be no doubt that it is with a sickening of heart that many hon. Members will yield to the absolute necessity of vindicating the outraged law and defending a menaced Union; but I say this much, that the power we are about to commit to the hands of the Government we trust them to see is not abused for the purpose of promoting the interests of a class or a religion in Ireland. It is our duty, in granting these powers to the

Government, to warn them of the responsibility they incur in asking for them and assuming them. That duty is to bring forward those large and far-reaching measures to which Lord Salisbury referred. I feel convinced, Sir, that the majority of the people of this country will not consent that the extraordinary powers conferred by this Bill should be employed to enforce cruel or inequitable provisions of the law on behalf of landlords. I felt, Sir, that I could not vote for this Bill without offering an explanation, and I thank the House for its kindness in permitting me to make it.

MR. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire): I desire to do more than give a silent vote upon this the first reading of what I venture to hope is the last Bill of the kind which will ever be introduced by a responsible Government into the House of Commons. In my opinion, there is no necessity for the measure. I listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) in introducing the Bill, and I found that for the most part it is clothed in the cast-off garments of its defunct predecessors, with only here and there the sewing on of a few shreds and patches which can be called new. One of these is the provision that it shall be permanent. A good deal may unquestionably be said as to that. But there seems to be a considerable difference of opinion in regard to the value of that provision amongst hon. Gentlemen who have spoken in favour of the measure. Some attribute the failure of the Act of 1881 to the fact that it was only a temporary Act, while others have said that it was a success, and that it was so because it was only a temporary measure directed to the removal of evils which were in themselves temporary. I am not desirous of saying which is the better argument of the two, and I leave hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite to settle their differences among themselves. I protest against the Bill as being unjustifiable in itself and likely to embitter still further relations which are unhappily bitter enough already between the people of Ireland and of this country. There is another of the provisions of the Bill which, but for its sadness, would be almost ludicrous. That is the change of venue to England. If this is frequently resorted to I suppose we shall find that nearly every steamer that sails from Kingstown to Holyhead is to carry a cargo of Irish prisoners, lawyers, and witnesses, to try their fortune at the Old Bailey. That is the most novel method of establishing a complete union between two parts of the United Kingdom that could possibly be conceived. I wonder whether if English juries were to act as they did in 1794, it will be proposed to send English prisoners to Ireland for trial. There is a complete novelty in this provision of the Bill. It must have struck everyone that there has been a lordly contempt for and disregard of all statistics on the part of the Government. They have expressly disclaimed any intention of relying on that part of the case. An excellent authority, no less than the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), has told us that there is nothing more deceiving than figures, and therefore the Government propose to leave them out of their calculation. But when it suited their purpose they were prepared to give statistics in aid of the Bill they desire to introduce. Not only do they disregard statistics, but they disregard the Reports of the Royal Commissions also. Although gentlemen were sent over to Ireland under their own auspices to inquire into and report upon the condition of Ireland, the Report presented to them by those gentlemen has been altogether passed by. The Bill, in fact, is based upon the *sic volo, sic jubeo* of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who make up or support the Government. Not only are statistics and the Reports of Commissions left out in the cold, but entire districts in Ireland are left out also. If there is one district in which more than another the law has been set at defiance it is Belfast, but Her Majesty's Ministers appear to look upon that city as the most peaceful district in Ireland, and allow the Orangemen to continue to "rule the roast." The material upon which the Government base their Bill is the charges of the Irish Judges. As a member of the same profession I have no desire to treat those learned Judges with the slightest disrespect, but I pay the utmost deference to them when they speak within the limits of their own legitimate authority. But as has been stated forcibly in the speech of an hon. Member on this side of the House, the learned Judges derive no authority from their offices outside the scope of the subjects they have to deal with officially. I confess, therefore, that I am myself unable to attach any particular importance to words which may fall from learned Judges when they are acting upon what I consider prejudiced information, and reasoning from *data* which hon. Members have not before them, and upon which they are therefore unable to pronounce a judgment for themselves. And what do these Judges say? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary read to us extracts from the charges delivered by several of them. But Mr. Justice Murphy stated that in his district the number of cases was very small. Is that one of the districts in which the statistics of crime have no weight with hon. Gentlemen opposite? At Limerick Mr. Justice Johnson said that crime has increased, and it will be found that in that case the increase of crime was taken and insisted upon, if not directly, at any rate indirectly, as a justification for the introduction of this measure. Mr. Justice O'Brien says that crime is frequent in the County of Kerry. Accordingly, the charge of that learned Judge is insisted upon as an argument in favour of the Bill, and the Government say—"Look at this bloodstained district. Surely repressive legislation is necessary here." Where there is an absence of crime, they disregard statistics altogether; and attribute such absence to some mysterious evil influence of the National League; they speak of the terror which that action produces upon the minds of the people, and say that it induces them to adopt some subtle modes of thought which this Bill, in some inexplicable manner, is intended to counteract. The learned Judge who charged the Grand Jury at Cork said that the cases of crime were few and comparatively unimportant. Tipperary where the charge was favourable has never even been mentioned. Therefore, as far as the quantity of crime is concerned, the testimony of the Judges as a whole appears to me to be a powerful argument against the introduction of the Bill. Then we are told that the influence of the National League induces men to do things which some people describe as immoral; surely, that is altogether an insufficient reason for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland, for I am afraid there are many immoral acts committed in other parts of Her Majesty's Dominions. But it is said that the juries will not convict on the clearest evidence, and that it is very difficult to get witnesses to come forward. There seems to be some confusion here, because no explanation has been offered as to whence that clear evidence of the existence of crime spoken of by the Judges has been obtained if witnesses are so intimidated as to be afraid to give evidence. It is also said that juries are prejudiced. Juries have been prejudiced before, and in cases of political trials apart altogether from crime, the prejudices of juries have been testified to by writers on Constitutional Law as having been of the greatest possible use in procuring an alteration of the law. I am speaking of political offences and not of crime; and a great writer upon the study of history—Mr. Buckle—tells us that for several years in the later part of the 18th century there was imminent danger to the Constitution from the attacks which were made upon it, which danger was only averted by the "bold spirit with which our English juries by their hostile verdicts resisted the proceedings of Government and refused to sanction laws which the Crown had proposed, and to which a timid and servile legislature had willingly consented." Of course the statement of Mr. Buckle refers only to political trials for offences such as conspiracy and political libels, and not to what are generally understood as crimes, from which it has been said that Ireland, as a nation, is singularly free. If, therefore, juries have been unwilling on testimony which was forthcoming to return verdicts which they ought to have returned, I ask whether this is not, in itself, a significant symptom that something is wrong in the law of which the jury system is a part, and which is to be taken in conjunction with the nature of the crime and the general political condition of the country. Then we are told that the Bill deals solely with criminals, and that good, excellent, and righteous people have nothing to fear from it. On that point, let me remind the House, however, that a portion of the criminality affected by the Bill is the law of conspiracy, and the law of conspiracy is a peculiarly dangerous part of the law to give any extension to, or to entrust to any but the highest and most responsible tribunals; because it often happens that the overt act relied upon is of an equivocal character—one which, in certain circumstances, would be innocent, while in others it would be guilty. It is to be determined by the intent of the doer, and very often the intent of the doer is proved by the overt act itself. Consequently, as the law of conspiracy is likely to be fraught with danger to the citizens of a free country, it becomes necessary to guard it with great jealousy, and no extension of it should be allowed to take place without every precaution against injustice being taken. When the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was making his speech the other evening, I ventured to interpose with a question as to whether any provision was to be introduced into the Bill to guard against the idea which seemed to have gained ground—rightly or wrongly—that in the constitution of juries on the part of the authorities there is some want of uniformity; and whether the jury panel would be struck in such a way as to prevent what is called jury-packing; such, for instance, as the nomination of a uniform number of jurymen on each panel; I do not know whether such a provision is to be introduced or not, but if the object of the Government is to create in the Irish people a spirit of confidence in the English Government, and in the administration and execution of the law, it would be well to take such ample precautions as would remove the possibility of any reasonable suspicion from the minds of the people affected by this legislation. The master of the situation, it is said, is the National League, which the House is told is associated with secret societies. Not a tittle of evidence has been given to bear out this assertion. The National League is an external association. It has its subscriptions, and is as open to the cognizance of hon. Gentlemen opposite as the Primrose League. I do not know whether it affects badges of innocence like the Primrose League. There certainly is not a tittle of evidence to show that it is a secret society. If, however, any measure is calculated to manufacture, and to bring the National League into connection with, secret societies, the present Bill of the Government is exactly the kind of legislation which is likely to produce results so unhappy and disastrous in their consequences. The National League has certainly not been described in the most flattering terms. Its action is said to be innocent here but guilty there, which would seem to be inconsistent with the necessarily corrupt nature which has been attributed to it. The question I would like to ask is, how has the National League obtained its power? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said the League is the handiwork of hon. Members from Ireland. Certainly they know—if any men can know—the condition of Ireland. But who gave hon. Members their power? We have heard a great deal about the mandate which the Conservative Members say they have received from the country. Have not hon. Members from Ireland got a mandate too? Have they manufactured both the constituencies and the mandate—otherwise whence comes their power? For aught I know, they rely upon no adventitious aid to place it in their power to coerce their fellow men. They are not possessed of titles, nor do I think they are much connected with Members in "another place." I do not know what their private resources may be; but I presume it is not because they are millionaires that they have been entrusted with this mandate. They have not the exclusive command of the Irish Constabulary, nor are they able to call into requisition the troops of Her Majesty to compel subjection to their will. Then, whence do they gain their power, except from the most legitimate source from which any Member of Parliament or any League can get its power—namely, the will of the people who believe they represent their sentiments, and are doing their best to redress their grievances. We have heard a great deal about the agitation which is going on in Ireland. I can understand men, for the sake of private ends, being able to go through a county, and for a while, by dwelling on unreal and fancied wrongs, to stir up angry passions, and to sow discord between man and his fellow-man; but I challenge hon. Members opposite — many of whom are well versed in historical matters—to produce any historical parallel of a successful agitation which has gone on for generation after generation, if it has not been based upon some real and solid grievances. But here is an agitation which has lived beyond a generation. Hon. Members from Ireland are the heirs and successors of men whose voices have been raised for generations in appeals to British Governments to govern their country in unison with their feelings, and in accordance with what they believe to be right. These men have gained strength as they have gone on, and they have done so because their appeals have been based to an unexampled extent on real grievances. Sometimes, under a particular leader, factitious agitators have, for a season, gained great power; but the flame thus lit has died out with the life of the man who fanned it into light; but here there has been a continual hereditary succession of complaints from the Representatives of the Irish nation. It is idle, therefore, to turn round and try to minimize these complaints by saying that the men who make them are agitators, and that their complaints are to be disregarded entirely on that account. I deprecate illegitimate agitation; but legitimate agitation is praiseworthy. We have arrived at our present condition of freedom in this country by the agitation of our grievances and the demand for their removal. That being so, I rejoice that this dispute is approaching a conclusion, because I think the hour is rapidly approaching, and I believe hon. Members share in this feeling themselves, when the destinies of this country and of Ireland will not be entirely at the mercy of a Government who—however excellent they may be as individuals—are unable collectively to see any cure for the wounds of Ireland except by rivetting anew the fetters which have proved so useless in the past; and are unwilling or unable to promote that less palpable but more real union between different portions of the same country, which is begotten of mutual confidence and goodwill.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) said, he wished to explain to the House why he, in common with everyone who consistently represented Liberal opinion in the Metropolis, conceived to be his duty to oppose this Bill step by step and stage by stage. The hon. Member for Central Hull (Mr. King) had made a long and heart-rending apology for his vote, which he felt was being made not to the House but to the hon. Member's constituents. Looking at the Conservative and the Liberal Unionists, he did not quite know what kind of hybrid the hon. Member was, but he prophesied that the hon. Member would be equally satisfied with the Bill introduced by the Government and the method of its execution. Most of the speeches delivered had consisted of choice quotations from other speeches, delivered under different circumstances and with different objects; but he hardly fancied that, if the charge of inconsistency which had been made were proved to demonstration, it would make much odds to the Liberal Members returned in 1885 who had been pledged to the hilt against coercion for Ireland. Whatever the policy of the Government in Ireland might be they had shown their hand very plainly in that House. In that House, at all events, the Bill was to be carried by the higher tactics of exasperation. The Leader of the House, who had a reputation for a sort of sublime common sense, had threatened Members of the House, like a pack of schoolboys, that unless they passed this Bill they would be deprived of their Easter holidays. For his part, he condemned that policy of exasperation, together with that threat, and thought the Government would be very lucky if they reached the later stages of the Bill some time before Whitsuntide. The Government wanted to draw a red herring across the scent of coercion which smelt slightly in the nostrils of the people. They wanted the people to believe that the Irish Members were obstructing. The greatest part of the time in that debate, however, had been taken up by Liberal Unionists in apologizing to their constituents, and explaining the extraordinary course of action they had thought fit to pursue. The hon. Member for Cork was about to move an Amendment to the Question before the House, and there were rumours about the application of the closure; but he would remind the House that when Lord John Russell moved this same Amendment in the form of a substantive Motion in 1844, the debate lasted nine nights. He thought the Irish Members would be very considerate if they occupied only a week in discussing a Motion of such importance as this. Further, he reminded the House that not only the orthodox Liberals, but many of those who opposed the Home Rule proposals of the late Government, had strongly pronounced against a policy of coercion, and no Liberal Unionist made coercion a plank in his platform at the last Election. What became now of all their talk about equal justice to Ireland and similar laws—all the cant of Unionism, of which they heard so much, and of which a good deal was heard even at the time of the Union? He condemned the character of the present proposal, which differed from that of every former occasion, inasmuch as this poorest of makeshifts was now to have no fixed limit of time. Sir Robert Peel in 1846 described a like measure as a temporary precaution until certain remedial measures were passed; but now Parliament was asked to give to the Lord Lieutenant for all time the power of suspending the ordinary law of the land. He supposed this measure would soon be numbered with the fundamental laws of the Constitution, and he suggested that the phraseology of the 5th Article of the Act of Union should be adopted declaring that the Act should "remain in full force for ever." Professor Dicey, in his analysis of the Constitution, pointed out that the whole of our political fabric was built up on the basis of the ordinary law of the land; but now the Government proposed to make Ireland the one exception among all the Constitutionally-governed Provinces of the Empire. The permanency of the measure made it more menacing to the civil rights of the people of Ireland than any that had gone before, and those who represented that people would be guilty of a gross breach of duty if they did not oppose it to the utmost of their ability. Some Liberal Unionist Members appeared to be fascinated with the idea of its permanence, and made it a great charge against coercion in the past that it had only been a temporary remedy for a permanent disorder. Where a policy was likely to prove a true remedy it might be right to make it permanent; but, looking at the history of former measures of that kind, he must be a very bold and sanguine man who expected such coercive legislation to be anything but a disastrous failure in the future, or who said it had resulted in any other effect in the past. The hon. Member for Mid Oxfordshire the other night told the House that he only supported that Bill in order to facilitate remedial legislation; but, he would ask, did the Peace Preservation Act make smooth the working of the Land Act of 1881? The hon. Member for Cirencester had spoken of the Union of England and Ireland being based on equal liberties and laws; but if a measure of that character were applied to England and Scotland, Liberal Members for rural constituencies—and particularly the Representatives of what was called the Crofter Party in that House—would run great risk of being sent to gaol for six months' hard labour. The Unionist Liberals had been complimented on being the staff of the Party opposite. Truly this was a case of "Thy rod and thy staff comfort me," despite the fact that that rod had been turned into a very merciless rod for the backs of the Irish people. The provision under which accused persons in Ireland might be brought over to London for trial seemed to him to be a sort of ballast clause which was not seriously drafted, which the Chief Secretary for Ireland would be ready to throw overboard when he received orders to do so from the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale. Yet, after all, those who read the Report of the Commission on the Belfast riots might be inclined to think that a Mayo Catholic peasant would be better and more fairly treated by a jury of Metropolitan shopkeepers than by a jury picked, as Irish juries are picked, from the Protestant community of Belfast. Again, any man who read with an open mind the Blue Book produced by the Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Cowper, would admit that nearly every witness who was examined in order that he might say the worst of the National League found very little that was bad to say of it. One Resident Magistrate, Mr. Considine, said that the League decidedly set its face against outrage. Another said there was a great improvement in the district with which he had to deal. Mr. Uniacke Townsend, a large land agent, also stated that outrage had given way to quieter methods, and that there was far less intimidation than formerly; and one witness after another said that crime was decreasing in extent and intensity. What, then, was the justification for that drastic Bill? The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Irish Land Question, and to investigate to the full the bearings of crime and outrage, resolutely abstained from recommending any special or repressive legislation. The case of the Government for coercion was made up of Judges' charges and anonymous anecdotes. The Judges' charges which the Chief Secretary had read to the House had all the same ring about them, and a resemblance to each other, and it appeared as though they had a common inspiration. It was a terrible thing that in Ireland every part of the civil and social administration was tainted with a political and party spirit; and certainly some of those judicial charges read by the Chief Secretary the other day were extraordinarily like the speeches of Parliamentary candidates delivered from the platforms of the Loyal and Patriotic Union. The Government could hardly be content to rest their whole case on a series of judicial perorations, or upon anonymous stories which could not possibly be verified. No lawyer would say that those vague and nameless stories would be accepted as evidence in any Court of Law; and it should be recollected that the House was not now dealing with the life or liberty of an individual, but with a proposal to abrogate, for time and eternity, the civil rights of a whole people. He wondered how long it would take the present Government to learn that nations were not ruled primarily by law unless that law had received its seal of validity in the consent and approval of the majority of the people who had to obey it. Under the new *régime* the offences which Lord Salisbury believed it was impossible to deal with by Act of Parliament were to be extinguished, and the seeds of coercion were to ripen very rapidly into a golden harvest of social order. It would be a strange negation of the teaching of history if that seed did not spring up in the shape of armed and masked men, the agents of secret societies, which the National League had superseded, but into whose hands they would again drive the impoverished Irish peasantry. Hon. Members knew that an emasculated Land Bill was to be sent down from "another place;" but the Irish people had not much reason to look to "another place" for conspicuous benefits. The House of Lords had been a perfect cemetery of Irish remedial legislation, and its annals were marked throughout by the tombstones of defeated measures brought forward in the interests of the Irish tenantry. In this measure they had got back to the time-honoured Unionist policy of coercion. He was not so sanguine as to hope that this Bill would not get through that House; but there could be no greater proof of the impotency and futility of the Government policy than its introduction; and as the Government, drawing its strength from many quarters, possessed all the weakness of an unnatural alliance, it would not be surprising if they became a Government of collapse before the final stage of their Coercion Bill was reached. Unless a strong protest were made from the Benches on which he sat, and from outside that House, against coercion, it would go forth to the world that the democracy of this country did not expect—did not even wish—that a healthier relationship should spring from the existing conditions and the admitted urgencies of the time in Ireland.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): Sir, I confess candidly to the House that, although I am strongly opposed to any legislative measure of the character now proposed, yet, in one sense, the introduction of this proposal of Her Majesty's Government is a source of sincere satisfaction to me. Now, at last, we have exposed to us the alternative to the plan of the late Government for dealing with the affairs of Ireland. We have waited long. Last summer a majority of the electors of England—outnumbering opposing majorities in the other parts of the United Kingdom—agreed to set aside for the time the policy of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and to instal in Office those who opposed it. I observe that right hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to find much comfort in the fact that they have received a mandate from the country, and to think that this invests the Government and its allies with a peculiar degree of sanctity and authority. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), when he spoke last week, was eloquent, and, as usual, vehement upon the subject of the mandate, and the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), speaking yesterday, based the claim and the reason for the introduction of this measure on this same mandate. He said—" We ask for these powers because we believe that we received a mandate at the last Election." But we all know that to say that you have received a mandate, is only a pretentious way of stating the fact that you have somehow secured a majority at a General Election; and I do not recollect that when circumstances have given a majority in favour of the Liberal Party, hon. Members opposite were in any degree overawed or put to silence. I am not going to raise any contention as to the mandate, by attempting to give it a positive definition; but I would say of it negatively that it meant that the Successors of the late Government were to deal with the Irish difficulty in some way different from ours. We have, therefore, been curious and anxious ever since to know what the course of the Government would be; but I can call to mind no occasion except one, until last week, on which any definite disclosure of the alternative proposal of Her Majesty's Government was made. That one exception was in September last. In September last the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), not addressing some meeting in the country, at which he might be held to commit no one but himself, but speaking at this Table as the authoritative mouthpiece of the Government, used these words—

> "It is the firm and decided intention of Her Majesty's Government to make a proposal to Parliament as early as possible, with a view to placing all these questions of local government and public works more in the hands of the Irish people than they have been."

This promise, so satisfactory to us, because we know that the more closely the condition of Irish affairs is examined, the more is our case strengthened, has been allowed to lapse into oblivion without even a pretence of fulfilment; and we have, during the winter, been supplied with many brave words and sounding phrases, but no indication of a definite policy. Many meetings have been held and many speeches have been made in different parts of the country, and everywhere the roofs rung to loud declarations in favour of law and order. This is a collocation of words with which we are now very familiar; but I hope, before I sit down, to state my opinion as to the mutual relations of law and order in Ireland. The words of the Prime Minister and his Colleagues in favour of the firm and unflinching administration of the law have been such as must have satisfied the stoutest assertor of landlords' rights and the most coercion-loving newspaper editor in England; but the puzzling thing has been that the action of the Government in Ireland by no means corresponded with their language in England. The steps of the Irish Executive have been hesitating, confused, and faltering. They appeared to stumble from blunder into blunder. Even their exhibitions of energy gave the impression of half-heartedness; and when occasionally they were goaded into strenuous action, their courage seemed to resemble that of some shy and bashful man in society whom we often see driven, in his nervous desperation, into the commission of acts from which a bolder man would shrink. The truth is, that it is easy, at Willis's Rooms and in Lombard Street, to speak bravely of the sanctity of contract and the rights of property; to denounce as swindlers those who have taught the Irish tenants to turn their weakness into strength by uniting; to compare them to sturdy beggars, or to garotters. But, while it is easy to do this at a safe distance, it is not so easy for the Members of the Irish Executive, who are on the spot, who have a direct responsibility, who have eyes to see and a heart to feel, and a conscience to which to account, to translate this lofty doctrine into practice. It was, therefore, not astonishing to find that the right hon. Baronet the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), Sir Redvers Buller, and those who were associated with them, exerted themselves with much zeal, and an irregularity of conduct to which they are now not unnaturally reluctant to confess, to stave off, or modify, those extremities which the rigorous application of their Colleagues' teaching would have obliged them to enforce. And now what is the cure for this ambiguity in the conduct of the Government? The powers of the law had been found by those who had to administer it so severe that they had not the heart to apply it in its full intensity; and, yet, what is it that we are now asked to do? We are asked to increase its intensity.

The case of the Irish tenant is so pitiable that the Members of Her Majesty's Government in Ireland did all they could to alleviate it, and now we are not only by a side wind, but, with a clear purpose and intention, to strike down the great defence of the Irish tenant and leave him at the mercy of the Irish landlord. I am sorry to say from what has occurred in this House we are not quite unprepared for this change in the temper of the Government. We have had some occurrences in this House, to which I think it right to refer briefly. I refer first to the unfortunate words used by the late Chief Secretary, when he spoke of using something stronger than blows from batons. Now, there is not a man in the House who is not prepared to make the fullest allowance for the right hon. Gentleman, who was evidently suffering from physical pain and irritation; but in respect of his words not one of his Colleagues has ever uttered a syllable by way of qualification or modification. Then I come to the occasion when the present Chief Secretary, in jaunty, if not triumphant, tones, expressed his high approval of the brutal words in which the orders to the police at Youghal were couched. And, lastly, I speak of the fact that when the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) called the attention of the House to the proceedings at Youghal which resulted in the death of a poor man, there came from that Bench not one word of sympathy or regret—although surely, whether the occurrence was justifiable or not, it was, at least, deeply to be deplored; not one word t indicate a sense of the gravity of the occurrence, only indignation, forsooth, against the Member for East Mayo, and the usual cold declaration as to the necessity for upholding the law. Every one of us here will agree with the right hon. Gentleman when he asserts, and even emphasizes, the necessity of supporting the civil power and carrying out the orders of the Courts; but the Government are responsible for the tone in which they deal with these matters in this House. In my opinion, you can inflict greater insult by a word or gesture, than by a blow, and, whatever we may think, I greatly fear that the quick-witted, intelligent, and sensitive Irish people, who watch very keenly what goes on in this House, will take these incidents, trivial as they may appear, as an indication of the tone and temper in which the provisions of this Bill will be framed, and carried, and worked. I venture to say further that, by incidents such as these, an amount of harm is done in the hearts of men in Ireland to your cherished cause of order which all the clauses of this Bill, even if it has all the effect you anticipate, will not suffice to counteract. What is the object of your Bill? The real object is asserted to be to put down intimidation, and when you speak of intimidation you mean, of course—for it is best to speak frankly—the action of the National League. The first observation then which must occur to every one is that, even if we judge by the conduct of the Government themselves, the case for dealing with the National League is not so strong as it was 14 months ago. What was the announcement made on the 26th of January, 1886, by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach)? He gave Notice that on the following Thursday the Chief Secretary for Ireland would move for leave to bring in a Bill for the purpose of suppressing the National League and other dangerous associations, for the prevention of intimidation, and the protection of life and order in Ireland. Well, that was not mincing the matter. They took the bull by the horns. They declared war against the National League and all its works. Judging from the speeches to which we have listened from Members of the Government, they appear to think that the evils of which they complain are more intense, as they are certainly more inveterate, than they were last year; and yet, this year the Government do not confront their task in the same direct, bold, and open way, but they approach it delicately and tenderly and with a considerable attempt at disguise. In Her Majesty's Speech we were told that what was intended was to effect some alterations in legal procedure. The ingenuous and unsuspicious mind would scarcely detect under that modest phrase a new Coercion Bill? It now appears that this legislation is intended to put down the National League, to suppress illegal conspiracies, to put an end to combination, to make intimidation impossible, to secure to all quiet citizens the full enjoyment of their liberties, and to establish the law of the land in place of the unwritten law of the National League. But that is a good deal of business to be achieved by "the reform of legal procedure." The use of a soothing and attractive title is not a new device. I remember the well-known lines—

> "The merchant, to secure his treasure,
> Conveys it in a borrowed name;
> Euphelia serves to grace my measure,
> But Chloe is my real flame."

Who would have thought that behind the Euphelia of legal procedure there lurked the Chloe of coercion? These facts, as it appears to me, are evidences of what is practically a matter of notoriety. The Government have been hesitating and reluctant for some weeks, if not for months, about bringing in this Bill, and it is only brought in now as a consequence of the pertinacious instigation of some of the more noisy and less discreet among their own Followers, and of some hon. Gentlemen behind me, whose thirst for vigorous government in Ireland varies in exactly inverse ratio to their responsibility in applying it, and of the dictatorial Mentors of the Government in the London Press. No one can venture to say that a case has been made out for this Bill on the ground of open crime and outrage. The poverty of the case in this respect is evident to everyone, and it has been proved by the reluctance of the Chief Secretary to produce the Returns which have always hitherto been given. [*Cries of* "No!"] Hitherto, we have had these Returns, but now they are withheld. [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, no!] Well, then, let us have them. We want the ordinary Returns of grave crime and outrage which support the demand for this extraordinary legislation, and which have always hitherto been given. The Chief Secretary based his case on different grounds altogether. He relied on the Judges' Reports, and quoted them at great length. What must have occurred to most English and Scotch Members when they heard these Reports read, is that such Reports are not usually made either in England or in Scotland. English Judges confine themselves in their charges to the Calendars before them, and if they observe that one crime is increasing and another diminishing, they may comment upon the fact; but they never think of launching into a diatribe upon the general state of the country and society. But the truth is that the custom in Ireland is different. The Irish Judge receives reports from the police officials of the country and others—and let me point out to the House that the Chief Secretary in coming forward to ask for new powers, quotes these same officials, and then quotes the Judges in corroboration—the Judges who have received their information from the very same source. A Judge has no special information or idea of his own as to the state of society. When he arrives at the Assize town certain reports are handed to him. He gets the information, and on that builds his comments, and it is the same information on which the Chief Secretary bases his remarks. This part of the proceedings of the Judges gives an effective illustration which I shall venture to make use of when I come to deal with the question of law and order in Ireland. There are, of course, exceptions to the condition of things I have described, even in the Judges' charges. The Chief Secretary expressed some surprise that my right hon. Friend (Mr. John Morley) should have dwelt upon the instance of Tipperary. But the fact was that Baron Dowse, in his charge to the Grand Jury at Nenagh, in the County Tipperary, wound up by saying—"So far as I know you have every reason to be satisfied with the state of the county." Could there be stronger approval of the condition of a county? And yet it was from this very county that the Chief Secretary took one or two of the examples of crime to which he referred. The right hon. Gentleman also quoted several passages from articles in *United Ireland*, and from speeches made by Members of this House and Leaders of the National League. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman has largely read the columns of *United Ireland*; but if he had read as much of it as I have, he would know that it is the custom of that journal to use forcible language, and hon. Members have also developed the same habit to a considerable extent. In fact, it is notorious that in a great political movement such as this, forcible language is used which would not be employed in ordinary circumstances and in cooler moments. Among the many excellent qualities which the Chief Secretary possesses, perhaps he will allow me to say that the most conspicuous is his exceeding ingenuousness of nature, and he consequently appears to take what is told him *au pied de la lettre*. Nothing could be more unfortunate in Ireland, above all places. I remember that when I first went over to Dublin as Chief Secretary, a sagacious friend of mine in that city gave me this advice—"Always remember that whatever you hear in this country on either side of any question, is intended to be taken subject to a discount of 50 per cent." I have since acted on the advice of my friend, greatly to my comfort and advantage, and now I am very glad to communicate it to the Chief Secretary, and hope he will apply it. The broad objection we have to this legislation which you propose—as we should to any legislation for a similar purpose—is, that it is not the way to deal with the evils which exist in Ireland. I do not deny the existence of those evils for a moment. I do not dispute that in many particulars the Criminal Law might be amended with advantage. I will go further, and say I think it might be amended with advantage in the direction of making it easier and more certain to secure verdicts; and the way in which I should be disposed to effect that object, although I am not a lawyer, is by extending to Ireland, and, for that matter, to England as well, the practice with which we are so familiar in Scotland, of allowing juries to return verdicts by a majority. It is at least my opinion that this would be an advantageous change; and there are other particulars in which I would gladly see the Criminal Law and its procedure strengthened and improved. But it is necessary, not only that a change in the law should be sound, wise, and equitable, but above all things that it should be opportune, and it is this which I deny to your legislation in the present state of Ireland. I shall endeavour to give some reasons for this opinion before I sit down. Again, I do not, for one moment, dispute the existence in Ireland of a wide-spread system of intimidation, founded upon and worked by a combination of persons throughout the country. Some time ago it prevailed to a very great extent, and was attended in many cases with much hardship and even cruelty. Some cases have been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the Chief Secretary. I agreed in the observation of the hon. Member for East Mayo when he spoke of the small number of cases which had been brought forward by the Chief Secretary. Some of them were somewhat trivial; there were one or two which were exceedingly strong. But with regard to the poor woman who was refused assistance in childbirth, and the child who was allowed to die without aid, these were, no doubt, serious cases; but are they a fair sample of the 836 cases of Boycotting referred to? It is ridiculous to suppose that we are to adopt this extreme legislation because there have been one or two bad cases, unless those cases fairly indicate the nature of the operation generally. Such cases, however, form but a small proportion of the entire number. I am, indeed, inclined to doubt whether the practice has not declined in vigour and intensity, and we have express evidence to that effect in the Blue Book of the Cowper Commission, which is not the quarter, certainly, in which we should expect to find it; but I raise no contention on this point. I fully admit the existence of the system, and I only join issue with the Government when we come to the further question, how it is to be met and coped with. First of all, it is well to settle in our minds what are the origin and character of this system of intimidation. The Chief Secretary denied that it was so exclusively agrarian as we assert. He found fault with the right hon. Gentleman near me (Mr. John Morley) for taking it for granted that it was an agrarian system of combination, and the way in which he combatted the assertion was rather singular. He said—

> "If you desire to know how far these cases go beyond mere agrarian objects you cannot do better than look down this column with regard to evicted farms."

And then the right hon. Gentleman quoted, with a triumphant air, in proof of his contention, "caretaking" and "herding." But what are caretaking and herding but agrarian cases? Then the right hon. Gentleman quoted such heads as these—

> "Being unpopular as a landlord; acting as an agent; associating with Boycotted persons; supplying the police when on unpopular duty; accommodating obnoxious persons."

But everyone of these things has its root in the agrarian question. The origin of the system of Boycotting—to put it shortly—was this. Tenants in Ireland—and these not only the smaller and more impoverished among them, but the larger tenants also in a country where the competition for land is so keen—have been for generations practically at the mercy of their landlords, as long as the landlords could deal with each man singly. Then it was that combination came in, which acted like the cord around the bundle of sticks in the fable, giving strength to units individually weak. But it is quite obvious that loyalty between the tenants, among themselves, is absolutely essential in order that combination should be successful; and it is to prevent and punish what is regarded as treason to the common cause that Boycotting and other forms of interference with personal liberty have been employed. That is the genesis of the system. I yield to no one in my disapproval and condemnation of its methods; but, at the same time, I am bound to say that, in common fairness, we must not forget that they were adopted in self-defence against terrors and hardships, inflicted on the tenant class, which probably involved even greater cruelty. I will give one quotation on this point from the evidence before the Land Commission. It is the evidence of Mr. F. O'Sullivan, who said—

> "The Land Purchase Act will work mischievously if the question is left open between landlord and tenant." Being asked why, he answered—"I know cases of tenants who are in such dread by writs, and by being actually evicted, that they accepted conditions of purchase which, on their own admission, they believed they were unable to comply with."

Let me say in passing that we are told we are going to have a scheme of purchase. It is a wonderful scheme, from all we hear of it—more likely to have been framed in a conjuror's saloon in Piccadilly than in the Cabinet of a Minister; because the tenant is to have his farm, and the landlord is to have his money down, and yet nobody's credit is to be involved. At any rate, you are going to establish a system of purchase which involves a bargain between landlord and tenant; and you now propose, previous to doing so, to deprive the tenant of the only organization which can put him on a proper footing for dealing with his landlord. The First Lord of the Admiralty said yesterday—

> "All that the Government contend for is that the conditions which surround the contract between landlord and tenant shall be even."

That is what we all want. But when you strike down the power of combination you destroy the only means which enable the tenants to cope with the landlords' legal powers which have borne very hardly upon them. However, Sir, I have quoted these words merely to show that if the tenants have combined they have done so to deliver themselves from what, perhaps, has been, and is, a greater tyranny than any other ever imposed by them. And I would venture further to surmise that if, in any part of the country, landlords formed a combination for the protection of their common interests, and if any one of these landlords violated the conditions of that association, he would be visited with a degree of social disfavour quite as intolerable, though perhaps not so rough and ready, as the treatment an offending tenant under the League would meet with. It may be asked what has been the effect of the combination among the Irish tenants? Has it been effective for its purposes? On this point I should like to make one more quotation. Sir Redvers Buller said—

> "Nobody did anything for the tenants until the League was established, and when the landlords could not let their farms they were forced to consider the question of rent."

Why could they not let their farms? It was because every person who took one would be Boycotted. Now, I have not a word to say in favour of the method; but I say that the effect of it has been to put the tenants in a better position than they were before. We may push the inquiry still further, and ask—Are the objects which the tenants have in view, and which they have thus in great degree secured, legitimate and honest objects? On this point I should like to quote very briefly from a paper which has not so far, I believe, been introduced into this debate. It is a paper which, I think, well deserves the attention of the House, and might well be perused by every Member of it. It was sent to Lord Cowper by the Bishop of Elphin, and it was acquiesced in by three of his colleagues in the Irish hierarchy—than whom men more able, respected, and moderate do not exist in Ireland. They are not in any way men of extreme sympathies with hon. Members below the

Gangway. I should like to read the whole paper, but I will make only one or two short extracts from it; and let the House remember that no persons can speak on this matter with greater authority than these prelates, for they know thoroughly well the circumstances and feeling of their flocks. What does Dr. Gilhooly say? He says—

> "There is no combination, public or private, that I know of against the payment of equitable rents; nor is there, except perhaps in a few isolated cases, any disposition on the part of individual tenants to disavow what are in their class considered their just obligations to their landlords. The present public combined action of tenants has no other object but the obtaining of equitable reductions of rent."

That is dated December, 1886. Then the Bishop goes on to describe how certain rents had always been excessive. He says—

> "The old rents were, as a rule, fixed, not by the produce or productive qualities of the land, but first, by the necessities of the tenants; secondly, by their competition for even small scraps of the worst land; and, thirdly, by their earnings in England, and even by the remittances of their children from America."

That, Sir, is how the excessive rents began. How did they go on? The Bishop of Elphin says—

> "The old excessive rents were again and again raised, according as the tenants were reclaiming or improving their holdings by their own hard, unaided labour, or when there was a rise in market prices; and frequently, when arrears of rent had accumulated in years of blight and famine, a new increase of rent was arbitrarily and permanently imposed on the miserable tenant as an equivalent for those arrears."

The Bishop then says—

> "Very many of our petty tenants still want the bare necessities of life, and it is only by hard, incessant toil, and by depriving their families of these necessaries, that they contrived in past years to pay the old rents. Who will venture to assert that they are still bound to pay them by still subjecting themselves and their children to such grievous privations? In their minds, at least, the exaction of such rents is a violation of God's law, which a just Government should condemn and prevent; and the English law that enforces it is, in their eyes, utterly unjust and to be submitted to only from sheer necessity. Therefore, were they even able to pay these excessive rents, which they are not, they will not pay them. The baton, even the bayonet, has but little terror for creatures so familiarized with sickness and death."

I will quote only one more sentence. The Bishop states—

> "From the above considerations, I have come to the conclusion that in all rents deductions have become necessary, and that in looking for them the tenants do not mean to act, and are not acting, dishonestly."

As I before said, I strongly commend this paper to the perusal of hon. Members. Now, Sir, the point at issue between us and the Government is this—Is the organization of which I have been speaking the natural fruit of social and political conditions, or is it the factitious creation of certain agitators? The latter seems to be the view taken by the Government and Gentlemen opposite. Break up the machinery, lay by the heels in prison those who work it, and then—such appears to be their theory—Ireland will be contented and happy. I will not occupy the time of the House in argument against this long-exposed fallacy. [*A laugh.*] Let the hon. Member who laughs point to one occasion in history when agitators have been able, without material, or with scanty material, to create a great National movement such as this. And let the House remember that this movement is not confined to the districts in which intimidation is alleged to exist: it attracts quite as much support and sympathy among the bulk of the people in the larger towns, and in parts of the country where Boycotting is unknown. We need not, indeed, look further back than a very few years. What was the groundwork and excuse of the Coercion Act of 1881? The late Mr. Forster was led to believe that, at that time also, there were a few evilly-disposed persons who were really the authors of the whole disturbance of society in Ireland. He called them *mauvais sujets;* they were the village idlers, and the village ruffians, and it was his belief that if he was only entrusted with power to put them in prison, the whole disorder would collapse. I remember that at that time there were one or two Members from Ireland who busied themselves in going about the Lobbies of the House advising the Government, and telling everyone that they could themselves name the half-dozen men in their own districts whose temporary removal from active life would ensure immediate quiet. What happened? Mr. Forster began imprisoning people, and the more his net brought to shore the wider he had to cast it, until the whole of the gaols in Ireland were full of untried and practically unaccused men, the number reaching something like 900 or 1,000. And the worst of it was that the state of Ireland was not one whit improved thereby. Nay, it was much worse, and that for two reasons—First, because, while no doubt, some of these men had been connected with the outrages of which complaint was made, a large number of them, although they may have had Nationalist sympathies, were quiet and inoffensive citizens; but when they issued from prison they came out determined enemies to British rule, and active advocates of National self-government. I speak of facts known to everyone acquainted with the circumstances of the Government of Ireland. Then, in the second place, if there was any effect upon disorder, it was to drive it under the surface, there to fester and ferment, and produce a crop of secret and criminal societies; and it was with those societies that the Crimes Act of 1882 was mainly designed to deal, and with them it dealt with a great measure of success. Reference has been made to the Crimes Act of 1882 as a justification for this Bill; and its provisions have been repeatedly adduced as furnishing a triumphant vindication of everything contained in the Bill; but hon. Members opposite cannot allege that the same state of society exists now as then. Where are the secret societies now that justified the Crimes Act of 1882? We have not heard a word about them; there is no proof that they exist now as they did when the Act of 1882 was passed. If it is not so, let us hear about them. The Chief Secretary said nothing about it; but it would appear that certain hon. Members behind me are better informed than the right hon. Gentleman. I speak of Mr. Forster with the highest respect for his character and sagacity; but it is precisely because it was so sagacious a man who was completely misled that we should read the lesson. Most of us on this side of the House, at least, have learned a lesson from this recent failure; the lesson—namely, that it is useless—that is worse than useless, it is mischievous, to attempt to deal with the instrument and the effect, and not with the cause. This is why we repudiate the Bill which it is proposed now to introduce. Surely the course which the most ordinary prudence would dictate ought to be followed —namely, to attack the cause, and not the consequence. The Government have brought in a land measure in "another place," of which this House has, as yet, no knowledge. I do not know whether it will come up even to the standard of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, which Royal Commission itself was not of a very satisfactory constitution. Whatever that Bill may be, I would venture to present to the Government a dilemma, and they are welcome to adopt either branch of it. They are going to deal with the Land Question. Their legislation will either, on the one hand, be a successful, final, and satisfactory solution of this great difficulty, in which case the occupation of this great combination will be gone, intimidation for agrarian purposes will cease, and all the turmoil and effort and irritation caused by this Coercion Act will have been absolutely superfluous; or, on the other hand, their land measure, contrary to their desires and intentions, will not be completely effectual, in which case surely they must know that some root of bitterness will be left behind, and that similar methods to those adopted in the past will be put into operation, and will be continued with equal disturbance of order until the grievances complained of are removed. Therefore, in either event, this Bill stands condemned. If the Land Bill is successful, then this Coercion Bill is superfluous; and if it is not successful, then the Coercion Bill will be inadequate. But, although it may be inadequate for good, it will be painfully adequate for evil, because it will do much to prevent the settlement of the Land Question in a reasonable and Constitutional fashion by further embittering the relations between governors and governed in Ireland. Sir, I said some time ago that I should have some remarks to make on the relation between law and order in Ireland. With regard to law and order, are they as nearly and necessarily associated in Ireland as we are accustomed to find them in other countries? As a general proposition it is true, no doubt, that the establishment and maintenance of order depends and follows upon the observance of the law. But, before order can be expected necessarily to follow upon law, there are two conditions to be observed. In the first place, the law must be equitable, and it must be recognized as equitable by the general sense of the community to which it is applied. This is, in fact, a generally accepted commonplace upon which it is unnecessary to dwell. But no one, in face of what we have seen, and of the disclosures of the recent Commission, can pretend that the Land Laws of Ireland, greatly improved as they have been lately by Parliament, mainly under the guidance of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—no one can say that they even now satisfy this first condition. But I pass on to the second condition, which is one not so often brought before us. I assert that it is necessary not only that the law shall be just, but that the people who live under it shall have confidence that it is fairly and impartially administered. Now, there exists in Ireland—let me be quite exact, for I do not wish to exaggerate—there exists in large sections of the community, a profound, deep-set, and hereditary distrust of the administration of the law. They and their fathers have seen the law applied in strange ways and to strange purposes. There is no such feeling, that I am aware of, in England or Scotland; where, whatever a man may think of any particular provision of the law, there is a general knowledge that it is fairly and indifferently administered. Let hon. Members of this House, who are not acquainted with the circumstances, bear in mind that that cannot be said of Ireland. I submit that this fact lies at the bottom of a great deal of the evil which we see existing in that country. The idea seems to possess, to a great extent, the minds of the Irish people that the administration of the law furnishes, as it were, a field for a sort of serious gain, in which one side endeavours at all hazards, by hook or by crook, to obtain convictions—manipulating juries, changing venue, getting up evidence, and so forth—while the other side try by every means in their power to defeat them, frustrating or refusing evidence, threatening or punishing witnesses, forcing juries to disagree. I do not state these things as facts; but I am speaking of matters quite as important as if they were facts—namely, the general sentiment and belief of the people. Each side thus tries to outwit and entrap, or to frustrate and defeat its opponent. Everything is fair in love and war, and so I presume everything is fair in this case. I am not stating my own opinion, but the deep-seated sentiments and feelings of the Irish people. Above all, I am speaking of the system only, and not of individuals. I have no word except of respect for the Irish judiciary, which numbers in its ranks some of the most eminent and distinguished of judges, and no one imagines that they would be party to anything unjust or unfair. But this is the feeling, and our system gives countenance to it, and lends itself to its growth. Even the Judges' charges, which have been quoted to-night, disclose the fact that they and all public servants in the ranks of the administration of the law are regarded as executive as well as judicial officers. When we come further down, what do we find? Take the case of the Resident Magistrates. They are not only Stipendiary Judges, but are in charge of order in the districts in which they live. They have many functions, for which they have to receive direct instructions from Dublin Castle. Few of them have had judicial or legal training, and they hold their offices at the pleasure of the Crown. Yet it is to those men that the power of of trying men without a jury for the most delicate offences is by this Bill to be entrusted. Certain powers were given to Resident Magistrates under the Crimes Act, and definite crimes were specified in the Act in connection with which these powers were to be exercised. But what do the Government now delegate to them? The Government give the Resident Magistrates powers to—

> "Try without a jury cases of criminal conspiracy, Boycotting, rioting, offences under the Whiteboy Acts, assaulting officers of the law, taking unlawful and forcible possession, and inciting to the above offences."

With the exception of rioting and assaulting officers of the law in the discharge of their duty, there is not one of these offences which will not bear a political colour. Offences against the Whiteboy Acts are of a very vague character—they are expressed in a miscellaneous body of Acts, which are to be administered by the Resident Magistrates, who are not only magistrates, but officers of the Executive Government, holding their office at the pleasure of the Executive Authority. The last head named is "inciting to the above offences;" and then the Chief Secretary, in what he would himself call calm irony, says—"We do not propose to interfere with the freedom of the Press." If the freedom of the Press is to be interfered with, let it be done directly; and I venture to say that no one would ever think of giving jurisdiction over Press offences to the Resident Magistrates. It seems to me idle to think that the Government are going to put down the Press by such provisions as these. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) pointed out that English papers using the same language as we find in the Irish papers might be taken over to Ireland in cartloads and not be touched by the law. But I would further point out that *United Ireland* may be published in Liverpool and circulated in Ireland without being interfered with. It is surely a most dangerous thing in these days to give to Resident Magistrates such powers as these. What was the recommendation of the Royal Commission upon the riots at Belfast? One of the first and strongest of their recommendations was this—and, let me say, there were two excellent Resident Magistrates in Belfast, Colonel Forbes and Mr. McCarthy——

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The Government have removed them.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Holmes) (Dublin University): The Government have since removed them.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Two footballs.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Whatever may have been the cause of their removal, the Royal Commission especially recommended that, in future, Resident Magistrates should be confined to their duties, and that their duties should be strictly judicial. If I were to say what I consider the greatest individual fault in the whole system of government of Ireland, I should state it thus—that the administration and machinery of the law either is or has the appearance of being tainted with partizan or political feeling; and, on the other hand, just as the administration of the law is too political, the civil and political Executive is too legal in its character. I presume hon. Members sitting opposite, and some Members sitting sporadically behind me, cherish the hope that they will be able to stem the rising tide of feeling in favour of National self-government in Ireland, of which the Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. T. D. Sullivan) spoke so eloquently the other night. If they entertain this belief, I am not going to say a word to disturb their simple faith and quiet views; but I would venture to offer them a word of advice in the interest of the hope thus entertained by them. If they wish to secure their object of reconciling the body of the Irish people to the British Government, the very first thing they ought to do is to set to work to disentangle the web in which, in the administration of Irish affairs, legal functions and political functions are so inextricably intermixed. Hon. Members below the Gangway would probably make the complaint that, in their view, there is too much political colour about the administration of the law generally in Ireland. I looking, perhaps, at the other side of the same shield, make a different complaint—namely, that the action of the Executive Government is too much guided and controlled by the opinions of the legal advisers; and I venture to say that this evil was never so flagrant as at this moment. I have thus explained the reason why I said that, in my opinion, it would be most inopportune, at the present moment, to make any change in the criminal procedure in Ireland. The idea of the Government seems to be that the best way to restore order and to secure sympathy with, and ready obedience to, the law, is not to make a strenuous attempt to purge the public mind of its distrust in the administration of the law; but, on the contrary, to add to the causes of that distrust by importing fresh manipulations of procedure, fresh departures from the ordinary Constitutional methods, and fresh devices for in getting round, in some artificial way, the difficulty of obtaining verdicts from juries. As I have mentioned the difficulty of getting verdicts, and the difficulty of bringing people to justice, let me mention a fact which I forgot to mention before in my argument. We are told—and statistics have been quoted to prove it—that a great number of crimes are committed, and that few people are brought to justice. Well, I have been looking at the statistics for England and

Wales for the year 1885, and I find that in those countries, where it is not pretended that juries do not do their duty, or that it is difficult to obtain evidence, the crimes committed in 1885 numbered 43,962, but that only 12,541 persons were committed for trial, or one in three and a-half. The figures with regard to Ireland may possibly be still less satisfactory; but, at any rate, these statistics show that there is a close analogy between the state of things in that country and the state of things in England and Wales. The Government seem to think that they will further the cause of order by importing all these fresh artificial changes into the established law. I think, on the contrary, that by the course they are taking they will merely furnish more food upon which the dislike and suspicion of your law will thrive, and that they will increase rather than remove the genuine causes of disorder. I have spoken too long, and I thank the House for listening to me. I have little more to say. My Colleagues on this Bench and myself object to this legislation as belonging to a wrong and discredited method of dealing with Ireland, and we have not failed in our duty of pointing to a better method. The fundamental vice which has caused the British Government to fail in Ireland has been that the Government has not been in touch and in sympathy with the people it professed to govern. I believe at this moment Ireland is more out of hand than it has ever been in any previous period in this century—by which I do not mean to say for a moment that there is more disorder or open resistance—[*Laughter from the Ministerial Benches*]—no; I am the best judge of what I mean to say. What I mean is, on the other hand, that the feeling of the people is stronger against us. It is more organized, it is more widely developed, it is more unanimous, it is more confident. The gulf between governors and governed is wide and deep. Surely it is not by cunning legal devices, it is not by the application of force, it is not by a curtailment or suspension of Constitutional liberty, it is not by placing, or rather by leaving, the whole tenant class practically at the mercy of the landlords — surely it is not by these means that that gulf can be bridged over. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, on Friday night, that the Government asked for these powers in the defence of Union and in the defence of order. It is in the name of real Union and in the interests of true order that we refuse them.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): The House will, at any rate, recognize that I am not one of those who think that lawyers ought to speak often in this House. In my opinion, lawyers, and Law Officers also, can do more useful work in watching the laws on the Statute Book, and in assisting the House in the passage of those Bills which are intended directly to alter the existing law. But in this particular case I hope the House will feel that I am justified in making some comments upon, and to the best of my ability some reply to, the criticisms which have been addressed by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite to the proposals of Her Majesty's Government; and I am sure the House will give me its indulgence if I am obliged, to a certain extent, to enter into detail, and if I attempt to make good what has been said on this side of the House more than once—namely, that Her Majesty's Government conceive that having regard to statistics, and having regard to *bonâ fide* information which they have searched and examined to the best of their ability, the evidence in support of the necessity of this measure is overwhelming. I may, of course, form a wrong judgment upon the materials. At any rate, I will submit my reasons to the House, and I will only ask the House to examine these reasons as I state them, and not to imagine that I am desirous of overstating the case, or of stating it in any other way than as the result of a careful examination of the materials that have been placed before Her Majesty's Government. Sir, in the course of what I may have to say it will be part of my duty to criticize some arguments which have been addressed to us by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman). I trust I shall be able to do so with the same courtesy which he would extend to me if he were criticizing my arguments, and, at any rate, to use as moderate language as he himself used. On the other hand, I cannot help feeling that, coming from one who has filled the Office that he has, with the experience which he must have had of what Ireland was at the time that he governed it, some principles which he has laid down, and some practices which he has recognized and has praised with faint condemnation—to say the least and perhaps more; the observations in which he has laid down these principles and dealt with these practices, are likely to work great harm, and to have a bad influence on the relations existing between the two countries. Sir, when I deal with that part of the case which the right hon. Gentleman referred to in his observations in regard to law and order, I shall, at any rate, indicate to him what I mean by what I have said; and I trust I shall be able to remove the impression that he has either produced or attempted to produce, that there is ground for attacking the administration of justice in Ireland. Sir, I also feel that, in my observations, it will be my duty humbly and respectfully to criticize some statements and arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I could not expect him to be here to hear me; but I do regret that he is not present for the purpose of hearing the criticisms of this side of the House on his speech. It is always difficult to criticize the speeches of men in their absence; but I will take care that I will be more guarded in my observations in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman, so that he may be less likely to think that I have taken advantage of his absence. Now, Her Majesty's Government base their cause upon the state of Ireland at the present time; and I am not afraid to compare the state of Ireland at the present moment with the statistics of the past. I am prepared—and before I sit down I will make good my statement, at any rate, from my point of view—to make good my case that, having the statistics which have been laid on the Table of the House, and comparing them with those of previous years, they show, not only ample grounds for the interference of Her Majesty's Government in the way they have proposed to interfere, but an imperative demand for such interference. I am not afraid, however many challenges may have come from hon. Gentlemen opposite us and in other parts of the House, to deal with this question of statistics; and before I sit down I will do so. There are, however, three other points on which I wish to make some observations to the House, in addition to those brought forward by the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—three points upon which I think our case may be rested, and I do not know that they are to any degree less important than the case which is based on the statistics themselves. These points affect the cases of Boycotting, the failure of justice, and of crime. I am not dealing with it now only as an accumulative case—I will attempt to put it together as an accumulative case afterwards—but I am submitting to the House that although whether any one of these three points, or the circumstances connected with them, would have justified the whole provisions of this proposal may be a question, yet either of these three matters is now in such a condition as to call for immediate action on the part of Her Majesty's Government, and all three combined most undoubtedly do amply warrant the proposals which Her Majesty's Government have put forward. I will take these cases, not exactly in the order in which I have mentioned them, but I will take them in the order in which they have already been taken by one speaker, and which will not be inconvenient to the House. I will first take the case of Boycotting; next, that of the failure of justice; and, lastly, I will take the case of crime. I take crime last, not because I consider it least, but because I want to put it in as strong a position as I can; and I will ask the right hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley), who challenged us on this point, to observe what I have to say on the question of crime when I come to the third part of my case. Do hon. Members in this House mean to deny that Boycotting exists now, and exists to an extent which can only be described as an intolerable reign of terror and intimidation spread over the greater part of Ireland? [*Laughter from the Home Rule Members.*] Hon. Members below the Gangway opposite may feel that an argument of this kind may be displaced by laughter. They are perfectly at liberty to laugh at it; but I would ask hon. Members to listen to me, and to judge whether, from my point of view, I make good my case. If they, with their greater knowledge, think that my case is so slight that they can laugh at it, then I trust that they will bring forward some arguments that may induce Her Majesty's Government to take a less grave view of the matter, for we have been twitted as having in the autumn of last year appointed a Royal Commission. It is rather a strange thing that that Commission now affords to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway some most important arguments in support of the measure they suggest for the reform of the Land Laws in Ireland; but has it ever occurred to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway to examine the evidence of that Commission, and to inquire into the findings of that Commission with regard to the point I am now pressing upon the House? On the question of Boycotting, I would say this—the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) the other night, speaking with that energy which characterizes everything he says, moved us by the language he employed in describing the sufferings of the tenants at the hands of the landlords during last winter, or during certain other periods of time; but has he no heart for those who have been suffering through Boycotting and from the action of the National League, which has countenanced Boycotting to a large extent throughout the length and breadth of Ireland? I, of course, say at once that I have no personal knowlege of those cases; but I have, at any rate, some experience in dealing with evidence, and I have not contented myself with simply taking this Report without seeing whether or not it was supported by the evidence. References are given, and I have examined every case, and I hope hon. Members will examine them for themselves, and see whether the findings of the Commission are not warranted by the facts. I will only read that part of the Report which has not been referred to, and I venture to think that what I shall read will make good the allegations we have put before the House as to the seriousness of the case. Dealing with that part of the case which rests on Boycotting, I will quote paragraph 3 of the Royal Commission. It says—

"In the other Provinces"—that is to say, besides Ulster—"combinations made themselves felt before the passing of the Land Act, 1881, and have in various forms continued to the present time. Outrage was at first made use of to intimidate parties who were willing to pay rents; but, latterly, the methods of passing resolutions at National League meetings, causing their proceedings to be reported in local newspapers, naming obnoxious men, and then Boycotting those named, have been adopted. Tenants who have paid even the judicial rents have been summoned to appear before self-constituted tribunals, and if they failed to do so, or, appearing, failed to satisfy those tribunals, have been fined or Boycotted. The people are more afraid of Boycotting"—

this was read by the noble Lord yesterday—

"which depends for its success on the probability of outrage, than they are of the judgments of the Courts of Justice. This unwritten law in some districts is supreme. We deem it right to call attention to the terrible ordeal that a Boycotted person has to undergo, which was by several witnesses graphically described during the progress of our inquiry. The existence of a Boycotted person becomes a burden to him, as none in town or village are allowed, under a similar penalty to themselves, to supply him or his family with the necessaries of life. He is not allowed to dispose of the produce of his farm. Instances have been brought before us in which his attendance at divine service was prohibited; in which his cattle have been, some killed, some barbarously mutilated; in which all his servants and labourers were ordered and obliged to leave him; in which the most ordinary necessaries of life, and even medical comforts, had to be procured from long distances; in which no one would attend the funeral of, or dig a grave for, a member of a Boycotted person's family; and in which his children have been forced to discontinue attendance at the national school of the district. Had we thought it necessary for the purpose of our inquiry, we could have taken a much larger amount of evidence to prove the existence of severe Boycotting in very many districts. We did not, however, think it necessary to examine more than a sufficient number of witnesses to inform ourselves, and to illustrate the cruel severity with which the decrees of local self-constituted tribunals are capable of being, and are actually, enforced. A document entitled 'The Plan of Campaign,' which sets forth an elaborate system for resisting the enforcement of legal obligations, is being extensively circulated amongst the tenantry, and has been acted on. It will be found in the Appendix."

Sir, I do not think there could be any more forcible argument than the simple reading of that finding of the Commission to the House. If that language is not too strong, our case as to Boycotting is absolutely made out; and I trust the hon. Members who may think the language too strong in its terms, will have the fairness and honesty to examine the cases mentioned in that Report, and then they will see for themselves whether the slightest colour has been added to the description of the cruelty and tyranny which forms the basis of it. I object very much to merely reading extracts, and though there are other parts of the Report bearing upon this matter, I will not read them. I have read enough to show that Her Majesty's Goverment did not rest their case upon hearsay evidence when they came to their conclusion as to the dreadful nature of the existing Boycott tyranny. As to the number of Boycotted persons, it was given in February as 836 families.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Persons.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. If you will examine the Returns, you will find that these figures do not mean members of families, but persons representing families.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: I am sorry to have to interrupt the right hon. and learned Gentleman, but I would point out to him that in most of the cases these persons were caretakers—single individuals, as we may say.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am strictly correct in what I have stated—namely, that this number, 836, is not limited to single individuals. Though, of course, in some cases, single individuals may have been referred to; in other cases they are families—heads of families. Nobody who has gone into these figures will be convinced that this 836 was the limit of the number affected by Boycotting. Probably, if you multiply that figure by 2 or 3 or 4 there would be no exaggeration as to the number Boycotted. But do hon. Gentlemen suppose that the number actually known to be Boycotted represents the extent of the tyranny or inconvenience that it puts upon those who are subjected to it? Everyone who has pluck or courage enough, or is rich enough, it may be, is able to stand Boycotting; but how many are there who cannot or dare not resist it? It was very well put that you might as well measure the prevalence of disease by the particular number of people who have died from it; or, you might as well say that any particular standard of evil that exists is to be traced simply and solely to a number of instances of persons who may come under a particular class of observation. If this number of persons that I have read to the House is known, it would be no exaggeration to say that three or four times that number suffer from similar tyranny. It will be no exaggeration to say that these 836 are only the visible instances. I was, I confess, pained and surprised that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) should have spoken of Boycotting in the language he did. He professed in one or two sentences to express a condemnation which I am sure he feels. I do not, for a moment, suggest that he does not personally feel it, but what did he do? He went on to justify, to a certain extent, this combination, and to indicate that there were reasons which would make acts of Boycotting lawful acts. The right hon. Gentleman went so far as to say that it was the punishment of those who had been guilty of unfaithfulness to their common cause. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that his words and his influence are not confined within the walls of this House. Do you suppose that the right hon. Gentleman's speech and quotations from it will not be used by those who desire to extenuate and find some palliation for Boycotting in the future. I do suggest to this House that if that kind of language is to be used, it is an encouragement to persons to say that if people, in the exercise of their rights, do not choose to form part of a combination which they believe to be illegal, they are to be judged guilty of what the right hon. Gentleman calls treason to the common cause, and are to be punished by this kind of self-made law, and by the judgment of these self-constituted tribunals. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman spoke also very slightingly of the Boycotting of caretakers. He spoke of these people as if they were interfering with an agrarian arrangement.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No; I only took the word "caretaker" from the list of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary—the list of persons who were Boycotted. The right hon. Gentleman argued that the list he gave showed that the offence was not confined to agrarian questions; but a caretaker has nothing but agrarian duties that I know of.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I care not where the name came from; but I want to know whether it is the slightest justification for Boycotting and ill-treating a man who is earning a few shillings, to say that he is connected with an agrarian question—that he is interfering with an agrarian arrangement.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I did not say that.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The right hon. Gentleman knows that I would not misrepresent him. His words were that the caretaker was connected with an agrarian matter, because he was interfering with an agrarian arrangement. The House, I think understood the right hon. Gentleman in that sense.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, no.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the right hon. Gentleman did not mean to offer that explanation——

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I did not intend to use any expression in the least degree derogatory of the caretakers. I was replying to an argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, who was trying to make the House think that this Boycotting and intimidation had not its origin in, and was not really connected as strictly as we thought, with agrarian questions; and I was pointing out that in the list which he himself gave were cases which had an agrarian character.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The point is this. The caretaker is supposed to be a person who has interfered with an agrarian arrangement, and interfering with an agrarian arrangement is supposed to be some sort of justification for Boycotting.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No, no.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: When I listened to the right hon. Gentleman I thought I fully understood what he said; but if he disclaims that which I believed to be his meaning, I am glad of it. It will remove, at any rate, one part of his speech which it appeared to me might be fraught with dangerous consequences. With reference to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, I must say that I do not think he has appreciated the real force of this case so far as Boycotting is concerned. What did he do? He read almost entirely from the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller, and he said there was no real agitation against rents, because of the answer Sir Redvers Buller had given to question 16,456. The question was—

> "Therefore, in spite of the opposition of the League, they are willing to pay? I believe that the great majority of the tenants through these counties, that is the majority of those who have not paid, are anxious to pay."

But there was a question immediately before that which the right hon. Gentleman did not read to the House. Question and answer 16,455 were—

> "Do you think that the improved state of the country as far as the payment of rent is concerned comes from the fact that the power of the League is decreasing, or is it because the League have given orders that rents are to be paid, if reductions are offered? No, I do not think so, I think the League would, if they could, prevent the payment of rents, and are now endeavouring to their utmost to prevent rents being paid; but the improvement in the payment of rent is because the tenants are getting reasonable allowances."

Did it occur to the right hon. Gentleman when he read the answer to which I have referred—namely, that the great majority of tenants who had not paid were anxious to pay, to give the reason why they did not pay? What is the reason? Why, because—

> "The League would, if they could, prevent the payment of rents, and are now endeavouring to their utmost to prevent rents being paid."

But that is not all—one other answer was read by the right hon. Gentleman upon this question. He read this—the House I think will remember it—

> "You have got a very ignorant poor people, and the law should look after them, instead of which it has only looked after the rich." ["Hear, hear."] "That at least appears to me to be the case."

I am glad the right hon. Gentleman opposite thinks that that is a correct view of the position. To a certain extent, he has had a good deal to do with the past. I find here, after the answer the right hon. Gentleman quoted, the following questions and answers—

> "16,477. And your experience of the district is really that the people, if left to themselves, are very well intentioned?—The majority of them are. 16,478. And that they are prevented from paying their rents partly by terrorism, and partly by real inability and poverty?—Yes; and partly by bad advice; this 'United Ireland' scheme, and that sort of thing. The three worst districts which I have got—that which I really thought were settling down—Mr. Dillon and other M.P.'s have just been preaching in, and the excitement they have created, will, I fear, again disturb them."

Sir, it is our duty to study this Blue Book. It is our duty to present whatever view we take of the case; but it is scarcely the right thing to pick out one answer, and to present that to the House as the effect of a man's evidence, when the two next answers show that the witness's evidence practically had a contrary effect. I pass now from that matter to the Boycotting. I am sure the House will understand that I have no wish, at the present time, to go into details; but there is sufficient information before us to make good our case; and I will now say a word or two upon the second point—namely, the failure of justice. Attacks have been made upon the Judges—most unfair attacks; it has been said that the Judges passed beyond their province, and they made certain charges—and certain extracts have been read in support of the allegation—which they need not have made. May I remind the House, as I pass, of who these Judges were, and of the circumstances under which these charges were delivered? I am not going to give more than five or six out of 20 or 30 instances that could be given from the last Assizes; but I do say that it will be to the advantage of the House that I should put before that the circumstances of the Assizes at which these charges were delivered, and I will submit that it proves to the House a failure of justice, and an inability in the clearest cases to obtain convictions, which calls at once for some prompt interference on the part of Her Majesty's Government. At the Clare Assizes, before Mr. Justice O'Brien, in the case of a man named James Kelly, who was tried for assault on the 4th November, 1886, Mr. Justice O'Brien—a Judge appointed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian himself, said "he was satisfied that there had been a failure of justice," and he adjourned the trial to the next Assizes. At the same Assizes, in the case of a prisoner indicted for firing a loaded revolver at a constable on the 30th February, Mr. Justice O'Brien said that—

> "Having regard to the verdicts in two cases yesterday, my fixed opinion is that if I do not adjourn the trial an entire and complete failure of justice will take place."

Mr. Justice O'Brien said this in the course of his judicial duty. It is nothing that he had not a right to say, and it was his bounden duty to give his reasons for postponing the trials. Let me call attention to the case of Roscommon, where a prisoner was indicted for assaulting and wounding, having smashed the eyeball of his victim, and permanently destroyed his eyesight. Mr. Justice Murphy, again, I believe, a Judge appointed by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and presumably, therefore, a Judge with no political bias, said—

> "The evidence is all one way, but if the jury choose to disregard their oaths, and are of opinion that one man in this county can knock out the eyeball of another with impunity, they can say 'Not Guilty,'"

and the man was acquitted. At the County Kerry Assizes, on March 11, 1887, as reported in a paper to which I think hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite can take no exception—namely, *The Freeman's Journal*, Patrick Hickey was indicted for a moonlight offence at the House of Mr. Casey, a farmer. During the *mêlée* the disguise of one of the attacking party fell off, and Casey recognized Hickey, his own cousin. No evidence was called for the defence, and a verdict was given "Not Guilty."

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I rise to Order. Perhaps the hon. and learned Gentleman will allow me to interrupt him for a moment. I defended that prisoner, and I pledge my word to this House I am willing to abide by the decision of Mr. Justice O'Brien if he did not directly charge for an acquittal of the prisoner on the ground that the charge was a fabrication, and if it was not at the Judge's instance that I declined to examine any witnesses for the defence. I ask the Judge's opinion upon that.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the hon. and learned Member defended the prisoner, I do not wonder in the least that he was acquitted. All I can say is this—that I cannot recognize—and I am obliged to say so—the facts as stated by the hon. and learned Gentleman, because the report in *The Freeman's Journal*, from which I am quoting, has not been in any way contradicted, or said to be erroneous.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman——[*Cries of* "Order!"]

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): It is most unfair.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby thinks fit to say that I am most unfair. I have simply read to the House a verbatim report from *The Freeman's Journal*, and I will undertake to lay before any hon. Member who desires to see them the materials I have at my disposal. I have said that it is impossible for me to come to the same conclusion as the hon. Member opposite from this report in *The Freeman's Journal*, and I think I have sufficiently justified what I have said in regard to the matter. But that is by no means the only case. At the same Assizes Mr. Justice O'Brien said that, with the exception of a few trivial cases, the juries had acquitted in every case that came before them. At the Limerick Assizes, Mr. Justice Johnson adjourned several cases to the next Assizes. ["Hear, hear!"] I do not know whether hon. Members opposite would consider it a creditable thing that cases should be adjourned at the Assizes. The outcome of the matter was this—that at the County Clare Assizes there were four cases adjourned, at the Kerry Assizes four cases, at the Limerick Assizes one case, and at the Galway Assizes two cases. All these cases were adjourned on the statement of the Judges that the trials, and the results of the trials, would not be satisfactory. It may be that hon. Members below the Gangway opposite are satisfied with these results; but I ask the House and the nation not to be satisfied with them. I fall back willingly on the question of crime, and I am going to make good my assertion that the figures relating to crime do not bear the construction which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian put upon them, and I hope that, in this matter, hon. and right hon. Members will do me the fairness to listen to me, and not do me the injustice of suggesting that I am guilty of unfair actions. I ask for a few moments the attention of the House for what I have to put before them from the Parliamentary Papers on this question of the statistics of crime. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian thought fit to compare the statistics of 1832 with the statistics of 1885. Did he think that there was more than one—perhaps the most junior Member of the House—who could be taken in by such a comparison? I assert—and I will make good my assertion—that it has been recognized over and over again by Members of Governments under the Leadership of the right hon. Gentleman that such a comparison of statistics is wholly fallacious, and has nothing to do with the case. If he wanted to make comparisons, why did he not take the figures for 1847 and compare these with the figures for 1885 or 1886? Those of 1847 are a great deal better than those of 1832, but a great deal worse than those of 1885. Has Ireland not improved at all? Are we to take nothing for all the attempts which have been made by the right hon. Gentleman himself to improve the condition of Ireland? The population of Ireland, as hon. Members are aware, has decreased; but has there been no improvement at all in education, or in any one of those qualities of the people which would induce them to be less guilty of such conduct? Sir, perhaps some right hon. Gentleman who follows me in this debate will deal with these figures, even if they are not brought to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I will take a case exactly in point. In the year 1870, on March the 17th, Mr. Chichester Fortescue introduced the Peace Preservation Bill of that year. He stated to the House the statistics with regard to the condition of Ireland in the year 1869. He stated to the House that 1869 was a great deal better than 1847. I can give the figures if the House wishes. He said that in 1847 there were 16 homicides, as against 8 in 1869, and 16 cases of firing at the person in 1847, as against 16 in 1869. Then he paused, and asked why, under those circumstances, the Government thought they ought to introduce a Bill to prevent crimes? He then put forward the state of intimidation in Ireland in 1869, and, in language which I will in a moment crave leave to read to the House and to adopt, he pointed out what duty it cast upon the Government of the day. Sir, do right hon. Gentlemen who sit opposite to me know that the state of Ireland in 1886 was, as far as these very crimes were concerned, considerably worse than in 1869? I want to show you how extraordinary it is that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian should have thought fit to try to displace the *primâ facie* case made by Her Majesty's Government by a reference to 1832. What has 1832 to do with it?

This is not a question of a comparison between 1832 and 1887, or between 1847 and 1887, but a question as to what is the condition of Ireland during more recent times. Sir, I want the House to permit me to read a very brief extract from the speech of Mr. Chichester Fortescue. He said—

> "I may be asked why, under these circumstances, the Government think it their duty to propose special legislation for the repression of agrarian crimes in Ireland beyond what was proposed in 1847, and that is a question which I desire to answer. I have no doubt that those who live in the disturbed districts of Ireland, and suffer from this state of things, would answer it in a very summary manner, for they call upon the Government to put an end to the intolerable system of intimidation which exists in those districts. But, speaking for ourselves, the case stands thus—in the first place, in respect to agrarian crimes, the comparison is not favourable to the year 1869. Again, it is very evident that our standard has risen since 1847, and that we are not prepared to endure or submit to a state of crime in 1870 which was considered inevitable in 1847."—(3 *Hansard*, [200] 86.)

So I say, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government to-day, we are not prepared to submit to a state of crime in 1886 which is worse than the state of crime which existed in 1869—17 years ago—as compared with the right hon. Gentleman's statistics of 54 years ago. But let me read on—

> "There is also this important circumstance to be considered—that in the disturbed districts of Ireland at the present time intimidation and terrorism—though not accompanied by acts of violence and atrocity so great and so numerous as in former years—are as general and deep-seated and as effectual as ever. The Government feel that, under these circumstances—putting aside all question of comparison, and taking the actual amount of crime prevailing in Ireland—it is their imperative duty, after having done all that a Government could do, with the means at their command, to check and repress these crimes, not, I am bound to say, without a certain amount of success, but not with any satisfactory result—they feel it to be their duty, under these circumstances, to ask Parliament for further powers. The main characteristic of the disturbed districts of Ireland at the present time is the existence of a dangerous and formidable system of intimidation and terrorism—and that is a point to which the provisions of this Bill are chiefly directed; because that state of intimidation operates so as to make it almost impossible to obtain evidence for the conviction of any criminal, and tends to the spread of crime of every kind, not only in the disturbed districts themselves, but in other districts."—(*Ibid.* 87.)

That description of Ireland in 1869, which was put forward as a justification for the Bill by Mr. Chichester Fortescue, represents to the letter the condition of Ireland at the present time. The following figures are taken from the Parliamentary Returns in every case:—In 1869 the number of cases of murder and manslaughter were 10; in 1886 they were 10; cases of firing at the person in 1869 were 16; in 1886, 16; other offences against the person in 1869 were 26; in 1886, 48; total offences against the person in 1869, 52; in 1886, 74. Threatening letters in 1869 were 397; in 1886, 424. All other agrarian offences in 1869, 318; in 1886, 558; total agrarian outrages in 1869, 767; in 1886, 1,056. All offences, including agrarian, in 1869 numbered 3,153; in 1886, 3,251. The right hon. Gentleman will find that the effect of the Act of 1870 was to diminish the amount of crime immediately after its passing. The four months before its passing were as bad, or worse, than the first four months of 1869 had been; but immediately after the passing of the Act crime diminished and matters improved. I do not know whether hon. Members accept my view; but if Her Majesty's Government honestly entertain the view I have attempted to put forward—that Boycotting exists to the extent which the Royal Commission recognizes, that failure of justice exists to the extent which the Judges recognize, and that crime exists to the extent which these statistics show—how is it possible for them to accept the view that the condition of Ireland is such that it does not call for that which Mr. Chichester Fortescue asked in 1870 "for the Government to put an end to the intolerable system of intimidation which exists in those districts?" I do not deny that any Government which proposes to amend the law takes upon itself the burden of proving its case. It was suggested, somewhat unfairly, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland had not made out a sufficiently strong case. At any rate, the case has not been weakened by further examination. At any rate, those who have had the opportunity of putting together and working out the case on the lines laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary find that in no respect has he overstated his case. [*Laughter.*] I trust hon. Members who are prepared to laugh at these things, and to treat them as matters of no serious account, will be prepared to deal with them by argument showing that the facts are not well-founded, because laughing is not an argument. I hope at some time, in the course of the debate, we shall have the privilege of hearing the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne (Mr. John Morley). He made a somewhat extraordinary Motion in regard to these proposals of the Government, and in the course of his speech the right hon. Gentleman stated that this was a Bill to enable landlords to exact exorbitant rents. ["Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) cheers the quotation of that opinion. He is a lawyer, a skilled and trained lawyer. He has filled the honoured Office of Solicitor General; but we must not discredit the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne by calling him a lawyer, because he belongs to a higher and nobler profession. Possibly, however, the opinion of lawyers may be entitled to some consideration in this matter. At any rate, I value the opinion of this House even on matters of law, and I believe that the House will acquit me of wishing at any time to put before it a view of the law which is incorrect. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne said that this Bill has been proposed for the purpose of putting pressure on tenants to pay exorbitant rents. He said that it would strike down the defence of the Irish tenants, and leave them helpless. The right hon. Gentleman heard what is the scope of the Bill of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and must have understood its provisions. His statement was perfectly clear, and speakers who followed him have shown that they appreciated it. Will some laywer, or some person skilled in law, kindly tell me which of the provisions of this Bill are for the purpose of enabling landlords to exact exorbitant rents? Sir, I care not for my position, except that I am proud of it; but I would be no party to this Bill if I thought that I was framing a scheme to enable landlords to exact exorbitant rents. This scheme is for the purpose of putting down crime only; it is for the purpose of stopping those who are guilty of criminal practices; it is for the purpose of relieving poor persons from the tyranny which now grinds them down to the lowest ebb. There is not one single line of the Bill which is intended to be aimed at trade unionism or honest agitation. [*Opposition laughter.*] The right hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) is perfectly at liberty to laugh; but can he read a clause into the Bill by laughing? He is a skilled lawyer I know; but will he now—or, much better, on the second reading of this Bill—point to any clause and say that that is a clause under which a landlord is enabled to exact an exorbitant rent? If he will point to any such clause, or the right hon. Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne will endeavour to make good his statement, I will endeavour to answer them, not by laughter, but by endeavouring to show by argument in this House which of us is right. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has told us that this Bill fixed a brand of inferiority on the Irish race. Was there ever a greater slander uttered against the Irish people than that suggestion? It is not the Irish people who commit these crimes; it is not the Irish people who desire that these crimes should be committed. It is a few—a certain number of them—who have, to a great extent, been led and induced to commit these crimes by influences that come from a very far distant quarter. We are told also by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian that this legislation is directed against those societies which have their strength in the necessities of the Irish tenants. How can it be to the interest of the Irish tenants that the societies should exist against which this Bill is directed? How can it be for the interest of the Irish tenants that societies should exist for the commission of crime, for carrying on operations by the commission of crime, for encouraging different persons to commit crimes, for promoting intimidation and violence, and for interfering with the administration of the law? How it can be for the interest of the Irish tenants that societies should exist for these purposes I cannot conceive. I know not why a Bill, which on the face of it and by all its provisions is directed solely to prevent the commission of crime, is to be distorted, for the purpose of political argument, into a Bill solely promoted for the purpose of enabling landlords to exact exorbitant rents. We heard from the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian another statement. I admit, perhaps, it may be because I am a young man that I am always enthralled by the language of the right hon. Gentleman when he is speaking, and I always think it prudent to take his speech and read it through afterwards, in order to see if there is quite so much argument in it as at first appeared. There were two arguments in his speech which I wish to couple together. Three times in the course of his speech he made use of the word "extreme." [Sir William Harcourt: It is your own word.] I am perfectly aware of it; but if the right hon. Gentleman will be patient with me, and allow me to complete my argument, he will see why I am referring to it. I have never suggested that it was not our own word, and I have alluded to it, not for the purpose of explaining the word, but for the purpose of showing that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian used it in a sense in which it never ought to have been used. We do regard these measures as extreme, as measures only to be enforced when the necessities of the case demand it. But to say that they are extreme measures of coercion, in the sense of meaning the most extreme measures that can be proposed, is simply to shut one's eyes to all the Coercion Bills that have been passed during the last 20 or 30 years. I do not think that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland ever said that they were "extreme"—he certainly never said they were extreme in the sense in which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian used the words three times; and I notice how anxious the right hon. Gentleman was to put that word upon us in that sense; but we agree that a measure of this character ought not to be undertaken, except in circumstances of necessity which justify it. The right hon. Gentleman said he did not believe he should have lived to see the day when a proposal so insulting, so exasperating, so utterly in contrast with the lesson which the whole history of Ireland teaches us, would be submitted to the British House of Commons. Sir, was the right hon. Gentleman alive and a Member of this House in the year 1882? Was he a Member of the Government in 1870, and was he a party to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1881? I admit that the provisions now proposed, be they extreme or not, should only be put forward when you have a case which requires their being put forward; but I say that, for the purpose of using inflated and exaggerated language to assert that they are extreme measures in the sense of being the worst form of what is called coercion ever introduced, is, I submit, to shut one's eyes to history. [*A laugh.*] Has the hon. Member who laughs ever heard of the clauses which prohibited meetings being held at all—of the clauses which gave a power to arrest persons who were out at night—which allowed newspapers to be seized wholesale—which enabled search to be without a warrant in houses, in order to find out whether there were threatening letters—and which suspended the Habeas Corpus Act as well? Has he ever heard of those provisions? And, on the other hand, is it fair argument to suggest, in the face of such provisions as have been enacted by this House during the last 10 or 15 years, that our measure is extreme in the sense of being the most extreme coercion that could be brought forward? I wait to hear what the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian is going to suggest as so extraordinary that he thought he should never live to see it proposed to this House. I suppose it is the clause referring to the possibility, under certain circumstances, of changing the venue to England. Whatever may be the view taken about that clause, of course it requires to be most carefully considered. Will the House allow me to put before them what I believe to be the real case on which such a clause should be founded; and if it is not made out, I admit that the House ought to hesitate before it accepts any such proposal. We have heard great phrases about Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, trial by jury, and by one's peers, palladium of justice, and so forth. Well, in 1882, the right hon. Gentleman proposed a scheme of trial, and of trial for life, which dispensed with trial by jury altogether. I admit that as long as you can get with safety fair jurors trial by jury is the proper course to follow in Ireland as in this country. But I am by no means sure that we, who have the responsibility of dealing with this question, would not hesitate long before we brought forward a scheme whereby you would establish a special Commission for the purpose of trying men for their lives. The Government take the view that it is by no means clear that we are not entering on a period which, in some respects, is unlike anything that has gone before. I care not whether the Gentlemen who sit below the Gangway, and who now hear me, were parties to the acts or not to which I am about to refer; but I say that those Gentlemen who thought fit to make such speeches as they did at Sligo, before the trial that was to take place there, committed an act of the greatest illegality. [An hon. MEMBER: The panel.] It is no question of the panel, or jury-packing; but a question of endeavouring to intimidate jurors who were about to be called upon to do their duty. I say that those men, whoever they were, connected with *United Ireland* who within five days after the trial of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) published the names of the six jurors who were in favour of an acquittal, and thereby enabled the names of the other six jurors who were in favour of a conviction to be known, were guilty of an act of the highest illegality, and one reprehensible in the greatest degree. Over and over again it has been recognized by the Courts of this country—and I should think it is the same in Ireland—that the jury-box is sacred; and jurymen have been told that they do wrong if they disclose what has passed between one juryman and another. I say that there are cases where jurors have suffered partly by acts of violence against themselves, and partly by Boycotting, in consequence of the part they have taken in connection with trials. Sir, if there is reason to believe that, failing our measure, the next step will be one to intimidate jurors, I ask whether the Government will not be doing their duty when they do everything they can to protect jurors by providing expedients by means of which there can be a fair trial without danger to jurors? Do not suppose that we lawyers at all shut our eyes to the difficulties that confront us in that course; but they have been considered, and the question we have to look at is this—Are the Government right in taking that view in connection with this removal? If the case for the removal be not made out—that is to say, if, in the judgment of the Government, in respect of the probable risks and dangers, it is not well founded—they would be the first to say there is not the slightest object for having the clause for removal in the Bill. It is for the protection of the juries that it is submitted. But it is, after all, only an incident in this Bill—an incident which only comes into operation under certain safeguards. It has no direct connection with the remedial measures of the Bill—that is to say, with the provisions for summary jurisdiction and change of venue in Ireland, and the suppression of associations which are acting in the ways that have been described. I feel that I have detained the House almost too long; but, at the same time, I wish to give my assurance to the House that this is a Bill which deals with crime. My words are in the possession of the House, and any hon. Member is perfectly at liberty to bring them up against me at any future stage. I ask hon. Members when they have seen this Bill in print and considered it, and when they discuss it, to point out to us those provisions of it which can, by any process of reasoning, be shown to have any other intention than that of putting an end to crime. It would be wrong, on my part, to discuss the details of the Bill now; but, as I have already said, its leading point is the punishment of crimes which at the present time are going unpunished; its object is to obtain fair trials where, as at the present time, they might otherwise be improperly conducted, and failure of justice take place, and to obtain power to put a stop to dangerous associations—that is to say, associations of the character to which I have referred. A great deal has been said during the past few days as to the position of Her Majesty's Government in this matter, and it has been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman to-night that the Government have brought in this scheme as their alternative to the plan of Home Rule. Does the right hon. Gentleman really think that that is quite a fair way of dealing with Her Majesty's Government? Does he think it quite fair to ignore altogether the Bill which he knows was introduced to-night for the purpose of dealing with the Land Question? Is it, or is it not, true that this Land Question is supposed to be at the bottom of what you are pleased to call the agrarian difficulty? Local Government may be, to a certain extent, mixed up with it; but does anyone deny that the Land Question is one of the most important considerations connected with the difficulty? And yet, for the purpose of an argument which will no doubt be used, and was intended to be used, elsewhere than in this House, it is said that Her Majesty's Government have put forward this scheme as their sole alternative for the remedial measures of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] Well, the right hon. Gentleman opposite shakes his head. All I can say is that, when he spoke about "the mask being stripped off," and when he said—"At last we know what is the alternative plan to Home Rule," his meaning was that this measure—which is a measure dealing with crime—is brought forward as an alternative to Home Rule, which we understand was proposed by the Party opposite as one of the remedial measures for Ireland. But, as a matter of fact, the measures which ought to be described as the Government alternative for Home Rule are those measures dealing with Irish land, one of which was introduced into the House of Lords to-night, and the other of which—the larger scheme —is to be introduced as soon as it is possible to do so. Enough, then, have I said with reference to this being the beginning and end of the policy of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Ireland. It is nothing of the kind. It is a step for a particular purpose. [*Ironical cheers.*] Probably the hon. Member for Northampton, who started that ironical cheer, does not take the same view of that particular purpose that we do. The purpose that we mean is that crime shall not be allowed to go unpunished. We mean that trials where they do take place shall be fair trials, and that Boycotting shall be put an end to. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian made a very thinly-veiled suggestion. Turning round to the place usually occupied by the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright), and then turning round to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain)—to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), and to the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James)—he told them that theirs was the responsibility for this Bill—that on their shoulders would rest that responsibility; and an hon. Gentleman who is not now in his place—the hon. Member for West Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), I think—with what I would venture to call an unworthy sneer — said yesterday that we were only waiting our orders from the meeting of Liberal Unionists to be held to-day. Sir, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government I repudiate that situation. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members may laugh, and they are at perfect liberty to do so; but I would point out to them that that is not exactly the way in which this question of responsibility ought to be dealt with. Her Majesty's Government accept the full responsibility for the measure they propose, and do not allow it to be shifted to other shoulders. [*Interruption.*] I do not care to notice the interruption; but I must say I am not in the habit of making audible remarks across the Table when others are speaking. I shall endeavour to observe the courtesies of debate. As I have said, the responsibility is ours. We have framed the measure; and, of course, it is idle to suggest that the responsibility is to be shifted to other shoulders. We have proposed this measure in the interests of true liberty. [*Cheers.*] Do the hon. Member for Cork and those very courteous followers who sit around him—[Mr. T. M. HEALY: Just as courteous as the Tories.]—imagine that I did not suppose they would cheer that sentiment? I was perfectly prepared for them to do so. I wished them to cheer. They do not take the same view of liberty that we do. We are not able to speak in this House as though we were the exponents of true Constitutional principles, and then go and make speeches outside which could scarcely be delivered within these walls. I am not here for the purpose of quoting against hon. Members extracts from their speeches, and founding charges upon those speeches; but when it is suggested that we are only to regard hon. Members below the Gangway opposite in their capacity as Representatives from Ireland, we are entitled, at any rate, to observe the character of the speeches they have made when not fettered by the responsibility of speaking in this House. That being so, I say their views of true liberty are not likely to be the same as ours. By true liberty we mean freedom of action under the

Constitutional Government of the Queen and the Government of the United Kingdom. We do not mean that English rule should be swept out of Ireland, and that the Queen's writ should no longer run in that country. That is the reason why we do not agree with Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite. By true liberty we mean that gross wrongs shall not go unpunished; that grinding tyranny shall not oppress the honest, simply because theyare weak; and that law-abiding and peaceable tenants and tradesmen shall be allowed to go about the country without let or hindrance from persons who have only their own interests to serve. We consider it to be our duty to attain these ends, or to attempt to attain these ends; and whether we hold the position we now have the honour to fill, or whether we sit on the opposite side, our determination is to do our duty to the best of our power, and from that determination no taunts, no sneers, no prophecies of defeat, shall turn us aside for a single instant.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Of course, I shall not object to the adjournment of the debate; but I must observe that the hon. Member for Cork has an Amendment on the Paper which, I think, appeared first on Saturday morning, and I am, I think, not going beyond the fact when I say that it is the custom of Parliament, when such an Amendment appears on the Paper, that it should be moved at a somewhat earlier date than that which the hon. Member has chosen. I am now under the necessity of saying that I shall invite the House to-morrow to come to a decision on the Main Question before it. It is now the eighth day of the debate, on what is practically the Question before the House. Four days were occupied in asking the time of the House, and four days have been occupied in asking leave to introduce the Bill. To-morrow will be the fifth day, making altogether nine days that will have been devoted practically to this one subject. I am sure the House will, therefore, think that the time has come when a decision should be taken.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): When, in the year 1846 — [*Laughter.*] Do Gentlemen imagine that a precedent of the year 1846 is out of date? In the year 1846 the Government of Sir Robert Peel introduced a Coercion Bill, and upon the first reading of that Bill there was a debate of seven nights. Now, the closure is to be applied in this case after four nights' debate. [*Cries of* "Nine!"] I say most distinctly that there has been only four nights' debate on the first reading of this Bill, and that is the moderation which is to be employed on this occasion. That is to say, that the Parliamentary precedents of the past are to be disregarded. I observe, Sir, that the pretence that the opinion entertained by you was in every way to protect the minority in this House has been set aside. The Leader of the House has announced that he is going to close the debate to-morrow night.

Mr. W. H. SMITH here rose—[*Cries of* "Order!"]

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I do not wish to interfere with the right hon. Gentleman if he desires to make an explanation—whether he wishes to do so now or later on.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I only wish to correct a mistake into which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman has not intentionally fallen in attributing to me a power which I do not possess. I simply said that I should invite the House to come to a decision, and I do not think that that amounts to an expression of an intention on my part to close the debate.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Then I am very glad if I misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman. He does not mean to apply the closure to-morrow night, because he cannot apply the closure without the leave of the Speaker, though he has announced to-night that he is going to invite the House to come to a decision. Therefore, he has taken for granted the consent of the Speaker. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] How has he ascertained the consent of the Speaker is going to be given? Because, on the first application of this Rule, here we have the Leader of the House coming down on the fourth night of the debate and stating that he is going to do an act which without the consent of the Speaker he cannot do. [An hon. MEMBER: He can propose it if he likes.] I repeat that he cannot propose the closure without the leave of the Speaker, and if he is going to propose the clôture of the debate to-morrow night, he has openly assumed that he has got that leave. Now, we see what has become of the great Conservative safeguards to the introduction of the closure? All I can say is, that if the hon. Member for Cork chooses to demand the attention of the House to the condition of Ireland; if he chooses to ask that before this debate is closed, and before this Coercion Bill is passed, the House shall inquire into the state of Ireland, and the majority, by closing the debate, refuse that inquiry, then we shall see what has become of your Parliamentary system by which, under the Union, you manage the affairs of Ireland. After the description that has been given by right hon. Gentlemen opposite of the grave condition of Ireland, if the Government should say—"We have got a majority"—no; they have not got a majority, they borrow one—"and we will use that majority to refuse an inquiry into the general state of Ireland, as a condition precedent to passing a Coercion Bill," what a farce the government of Ireland is! What a farce the Union is! Perhaps the word "farce" is hardly sufficient—what a travesty your Union is! That would be a more appropriate phrase. There is another inquiry I should like to make. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has assumed the consent of the Speaker to the closure——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must point out that the Motion now before the House is one for the adjournment of the debate; and, further than that, I regard these constant references as to whether my assent has been obtained or not as utterly and entirely irregular. I think it fair to myself and just to the House to say that if any insinuation of that sort is made it is unworthy and it is untrue. No assent of mine has been asked or withheld. It rests entirely with the Speaker to-morrow night, if the Motion is made, either to give or withhold that assent.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Sir, I entirely assumed that that was so, and it is because I assumed that that was so that I condemned the language of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith). I hope it was not so intended, but it certainly was——

MR. R. G. C. MOWBRAY (Lancashire, Prestwich): Sir, I beg to ask you, whether, after the ruling you have given—and given in the most decided way—any further allusion to this matter is irrelevant to the issue before the House?

MR. SPEAKER: I entertained the hope that the discussion on this point would cease. I entirely acquit the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) of making any unfair allusion; but the words of the right hon. Gentleman were open to the inference drawn from them, and I thought it right to repudiate it.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Sir, I have no intention to pursue this matter any further, except to point out that you, Sir, have very kindly indicated that in your opinion I had not made any imputation or insinuation. I had criticized the language of the Leader of the House, which I think I had a right to do. Now, Sir, there is another point upon which I think we ought to have some explanation; and that is, when the House does come to a decision on the first reading of the Bill, what interval the Government propose should take place between the first and second readings? When I was responsible for introducing a Coercion Bill in 1882, it was immediately after the murders in the Phœnix Park. The matter was extremely urgent; and, naturally, the Government of the day made the demand at the earliest moment that they thought was possible or proper under the circumstances. The interval which I proposed should elapse between the granting of leave to introduce the Bill and the second reading was a week. I asked leave to introduce the Bill on a Thursday, and leave was given—[An hon. MEMBER: Immediately.] Yes; I hope hon. Gentlemen will not invite me to go into a comparison between the circumstances of that time and the present, because it would not be regular on this Motion. I am justified in saying that the circumstances at that time were extremely urgent. The House was extremely unanimous, and the dissent was very small in numbers; but the Government did not think it justifiable to ask for a second reading at a less interval than that of a week. I want to know, under these circumstances, what is the proposal the Government mean to make;

what time they mean to give to the House and to the country, before proposing the second reading of the Bill, to consider the clauses of the Bill in print? The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) has challenged us to-night to examine the clauses, and it is quite plain that such an interval should be allowed between the first and second readings as will admit of a proper examination of the clauses being made.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: A request has been made to me, which I think it right to answer. I do not wish to refer to any of the questions in dispute between the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) and myself, but simply to say that, as regards the second reading of the Bill, we propose to follow the precedent that was set by the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1881. If the Bill is read a first time to-morrow night we shall put it down for a second reading on Monday.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we can have no hesitation in saying that we shall oppose that proposal with all the legitimate means at our command. The Bill to which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) refers was, in effect, a Bill of a single clause. This Bill is a Bill abounding, as every Member of the House admits, in difficult, intricate, and technical matters. I will mention another point which I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will at once recognize the force of. As soon as the Bill is printed it must be sent to the country most immediately concerned. Are we going to be asked to read the Bill a second time before we have had an opportunity of consulting our legal friends and others in Ireland in respect to the Bill? [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laugh at the idea of a Bill of this kind being submitted to the examination of legal authorities on the spot. I submit that a more unjustifiable proposition than that the right hon. Gentleman has just made was never made in this House. Here is a Bill practically suspending trial by jury, one of the most important branches of ordinary civil life—[An hon. Member: For ever.]—yes; for ever. We are to receive it from the printers, if they are tolerably expeditious, on Saturday morning, and we are to read it a second time on Monday afternoon. Sir, we shall resist that proposal.

Mr. PARNELL: The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), while assenting to the Motion for the adjournment of the debate——

Mr. SPEAKER: I must point out that the hon. Gentleman has already spoken.

Mr. PARNELL: I submit to you, Sir, that I spoke upon the Main Question before the House. It is well known that a Member who moves the adjournment of the debate is speaking technically on the Main Question until his Motion has been put from the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member cannot, in the circumstances, speak twice; but if the House likes to grant its indulgence to him, he may, no doubt, address it again.

Mr. PARNELL: I think the House might very reasonably grant me its indulgence, looking at the position the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith) has placed me in consequence of the announcement he has just made. If I understand him aright, he intends to ask the House to apply the closure upon the debate on my Amendment to-morrow evening. That is what I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say, and that belief is confirmed by the report of some proceedings which took place at a meeting of the Party of the right hon. Gentleman this afternoon. According to a report—apparently an authorized report—which has been supplied to the newspapers by the two Press Associations the right hon. Gentleman announced to his Party—

> "That the decision must be taken to-morrow even if the closure was to be put in force, both on Mr. Parnell's Amendment and the first reading, and he, therefore, trusted the supporters of the Government would be in their places."

Now, I think the House is entitled at the earliest opportunity to receive as much information as the right hon. Gentleman gave to the meeting of his supporters this afternoon. In view of the Amendment of which I have given Notice and of the debate which may take place upon it, the House is entitled to know whether the statements made in the evening newspapers with regard to the intentions of the right hon. Gentleman are correct or not. We ought to know upon what conditions we are to go into this debate to-morrow night. If it be true that the right hon. Gentleman has made up his mind to apply for the closure to-morrow night, I myself should have very carefully to consider in the interval between now and the next Sitting of the House whether I should move my Amendment and go into the debate with the rope of closure round my neck. The right hon. Gentleman has relied upon precedent. He has said that, according to precedent, my Amendment should have been moved at an earlier date. That is undoubtedly so, but I will also say, Mr. Speaker, that, according to the precedent of the House, the information which the Government have only just vouchsafed in another place to-night should have been given at an earlier date. It was impossible for me to ask the House to go into a debate upon the state of Ireland without having the full programme of Her Majesty's Government with regard to that country in my possession. The late Mr. Maguire, who moved the Motion of which I have also given Notice, did not move that Motion until Her Majesty's Government of that day had announced their full intentions, and until he had all the facts in his possession which it was necessary for him to have, and which it was necessary for the House to have before it came to a decision. It would have been utterly impossible for me to have moved this Amendment at an earlier date—it was impossible for me to move my Amendment until we received the information which has been given to-night in another place. That is my answer to the right hon. Gentleman. If there has been delay in the moving of this Amendment the fault rests on his shoulders and not on mine, because he has disregarded the precedents set by other Governments in important matters of this kind. Now, I must press for a plain answer to a plain question. As the right hon. Gentleman has alluded to the subject of closure, we are entitled to know whether the report of his speech to his followers is a correct one. I submit that, as the proposed Mover of an Amendment for which there is high Parliamentary precedent and sanction, I should be placed in the same position of advantage that the right hon. Gentleman placed his own followers at an earlier period of the day. I beg to remind the right hon. Gentleman that on a former occasion when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian called together a meeting of his followers and announced to them an important decision in regard to the Home Rule Bill which was then under discussion, and when he was challenged the very same evening in the House of Commons to state what had taken place at the meeting, he felt compelled to make an explicit declaration.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I can only answer the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Parnell) by the indulgence of the House. Assuming that is extended to me, I may state most distinctly, in the presence of many hon. Gentlemen who were present at the meeting to-day, that I made no reference whatever to the closure. I expressed the hope that the Division would be taken to-morrow night; but I made no reference whatever to closure.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

METROPOLITAN OPEN SPACES ACT (1881) EXTENSION BILL.—[BILL 171.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Dalrymple, Sir Charles Forster, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Reid, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Salt.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 28th March.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I am not in favour of taking vengeance upon this Bill because we cannot get its provisions extended to Ireland; but I do think we are entitled to ask the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock) to obtain some guarantee from the President of the Local Government Board that, when the Bill is passed, the Government will consent to a similar measure for Ireland. Considering the great interest taken in this Bill, I should deplore obstruction to the arrangement which has been arrived at; but, before we consent to further progress being made, I think we are entitled to know what is the view of the Government on this matter. I should like to know whether, if we allow the remaining clauses of the Bill to be taken, a favourable consideration will be given to our request that a similar Bill shall be introduced for Ireland, a proposal which has already the support of all persons of importance in Dublin, both Catholic and Protestant.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I must point out to the hon. and learned Member for Longford that this Bill is not a Government measure. If it were, it would be the duty of the Government to consider whether or not it should be a Bill to apply to Ireland. It is a Bill brought in by a private Member; but the proposal to extend the Act of 1881 seems to Her Majesty's Government so reasonable that they do not consider it to be their duty to oppose it; but, on the contrary, that it should have their acceptance. The hon. and learned Member for Longford asks if the Government will extend the provisions of the Bill to Ireland? I can only say that if the condition of things in Ireland is similar to the condition of things in England, with which this Bill deals, for my part I see no reason why the same powers as those proposed to be given to Local Authorities here should not be given to Local Authorities in Ireland; and if a Bill for the purpose is promoted by any hon. Gentleman in this House under similar circumstances, so far as I know, there is no reason why it should not become law. The hon. and learned Member is aware that the clauses of the Bill have been agreed to, and that there only remains the Preamble to be considered. I hope, therefore, the hon. and learned Member will see that because it does not apply to Ireland is no reason why it should not be allowed to go through Committee.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I should certainly be most happy that the provisions of the Bill should be extended to Ireland, and I should, therefore, have been glad to meet the wishes of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy); but, seeing that the Title and Preamble of the Bill alone remain to be considered, as has been pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie), it would be impossible, as I understand, to apply it at the moment to Ireland. I believe, however, that this might be done on Report, and if the hon. and learned Gentleman and his Friends would like three or four days in order to consider a clause to be proposed on Report, I am willing, if they will allow the Bill now to proceed, to postpone that stage for the purpose.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I would suggest that we allow the Bill to proceed to the extent of dealing with the Amendments, and that the question should be raised on the Motion that the Bill be reported to the House.

On the Motion of Mr. HOULDSWORTH, the following Amendments made:—In Preamble, line 1, leave out "Act," and insert "Acts;" after "Acts," insert "1887 and;" and in line 2, leave out "Act," and insert "Acts."

On the Motion of Mr. RITCHIE, the following Amendments made:—In Preamble, line 5, leave out "similar;" line 6, leave out "Urban;" and in line 8, after "aforesaid," insert "and also to amend 'The Metropolitan Open Spaces Act, 1881,' and 'The Disused Burial Ground Act, 1884.'"

Preamble, as amended, *agreed to.*

On the Motion of Mr. RITCHIE, the following Amendment made:—In Title, leave out "Act," and insert "Acts 1887 and;" and leave out "Urban."

Title, as amended, *agreed to.*

THE CHAIRMAN: The Question is, "That I report this Bill, as amended, to the House."

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): I think that before the Bill is reported to the House we are entitled to a more definite statement from the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) as to whether the Government will extend its provisions to Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman has said that if the condition of things in Ireland is similar to the condition of things in England, he could see no reason why the same powers as those here given to Local Authorities in England and Wales should not be likewise given to Local Authorities in Ireland. We have in Ireland the same sanitary machinery as in England, and, as has been pointed out, all parties in Ireland are in favour of this proposal. I cannot, therefore, see that there is the smallest difficulty in the way of the Government making the provisions of the Bill of the hon. Baronet apply to Ireland. For this reason I ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us some more definite information on this matter than we have yet received. I appeal to the

Government to undertake to consider the position of Ireland with regard to our proposal, and to say that, if they find the facts to be as they have been stated, they will offer no objection to this Bill being amended on Report in the sense in which we desire that it should be amended, so that the same law which has been found to be most proper and beneficial shall be extended in Ireland as well as in England and Wales.

MR. RITCHIE: This Bill is not within the Department of the Local Government Board, although, because to some extent it affects Local Authorities, I have taken some part in the matter. I can do no more than promise that I will bring the subject under the notice of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour).

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): The Bill which the hon. Baronet has brought forward had its origin in a meeting held in Dublin for the purpose of relieving the distress which prevailed in the city. That meeting was attended by the Archbishop and the principal Conservatives in Dublin, and one of the greatest difficulties which presented itself in the way of relieving distress was that of obtaining authority to deal with open spaces in Dublin. If the Chief Secretary for Ireland will confer with his political supporters in the City of Dublin, he will find that there is a general desire amongst Conservatives there for an extension of this Bill to Ireland, and which is in no way affected by the blocking process resorted to by Gentlemen who know very little of the circumstances.

DR. J. E. KENNY (Cork, S.): I venture to add my appeal to that of my hon. Friend's. I think it does not speak loudly of the benevolence of the spirit in which the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) treats his countrymen that he should have put down a blocking Notice. It is perfectly true that the present Bill arises altogether out of the meeting which my hon. Friend has referred to as having been held for the purpose of relieving distress in Dublin; and I, therefore, trust that the Government will bring pressure to bear on their supporters to get the Bill extended to Ireland.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill *reported*, with an amended Title; as amended, to be considered upon *Wednesday* next, and to be *printed*. [Bill 214.]

CITY OF LONDON FIRE INQUESTS BILL—[BILL 165.]

(*Sir Robert Fowler, Mr. Hubbard.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London): I beg to move that this Order be discharged, and I do so owing to the ruling of the Examiner of Bills that this ought to have been brought in as a Private Bill. Perhaps I may be permitted to appeal to the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) to consider the question to which the Bill relates, and to legislate upon it as early as possible. The question of fires taking place in the Metropolis is one well worthy the consideration of the Home Office, and I hope they will look into the question and bring in a Bill which may settle the question, not only as regards the City of London, but as regards the country at large.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order be discharged."—(*Sir Robert Fowler.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I happen to know something in regard to this measure, and I cannot commend the way in which it has been dealt with. The Examiner of Bills, for some reason of his own, chooses to rule that this should be brought in as a Private Bill. In my opinion, the practice which is now springing up of the Examiner interfering with the rights of private Members is little less than a breach of the Privileges of this House.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): An appeal has been made to me by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London (Sir Robert Fowler). I have had short Notice, and certainly did not expect such a question would be raised in such a way. I understood to-day that this Bill was abandoned, because of the difficulty of treating it in the way required by the Standing Orders of the House. The hon. Baronet, of course, knows there is little chance of dealing with a question of this kind in the present Session, and I think he will recognize that these are rather early days to ask the Government for pledges with regard to the next Session. The Government regard the question as one deserving of consideration; and, although we do not wish to pledge ourselves as to any future action, we hope the hon. Baronet will not consider himself debarred by our refusing to pledge ourselves from raising the question on a future occasion.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Order *discharged;* Bill *withdrawn.*

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (SCOTLAND) (CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lacaita, Bill for the better prevention of Corrupt and Illegal Practices at Municipal and other Elections in Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Lacaita, Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. Shiress Will, and Mr. Donald Crawford.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 215.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 1*st April,* 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Army (Annual) * (55); Merchant Shipping (Fishing Boats) Acts Amendment * (51).

Committee—Railway and Canal Traffic (32-60).

Committee — Report — Sheriffs (Consolidation) * (50); County Courts (Expenses) * (48).

Third Reading — Church Patronage * (52); Lunacy * (8), and *passed.*

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

QUESTION.

Lord **BRABOURNE** begged to ask the Lord Privy Seal a Question, of which he had given him private Notice. In the report of the able speech of his noble Friend on the previous evening, in introducing the Irish Land Law Bill, he was represented in the usual channels of information as having said that the clauses relating to equitable jurisdiction would only be applicable to holdings of an annual value of more than £25; as, from the general tenour of the observations of his noble Friend, he (Lord Brabourne) thought there must have been some misapprehension upon this point, he wished to ask for an explanation.

The **LORD PRIVY SEAL** (Earl Cadogan): The Question of my noble Friend gives me an opportunity, of which I am glad to avail myself, of explaining the point to which I have referred. There has certainly been some mistake in what I am supposed to have said with reference to the value of holdings to which the equitable jurisdiction clauses of the Irish Land Bill will refer. Those clauses will be limited in their application to all holdings the rent of which does not exceed £50 a-year.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL

(*The Lord Stanley of Preston.*)

(NO. 32.) COMMITTEE.

House again in Committee (according to Order).

PART II.—Traffic.

The Earl of **CRAWFORD**, in moving the insertion of a clause before Clause 24, said, that the cost of providing stations was mentioned in the Bill as being a legitimate subject for making terminal charges. The object of the Amendment was to define what charges were to be included in the maximum rate or toll. The effect would be to restore the law to what it had been before the decision in Hall's case, by which the decision of the House of Lords had been reversed by an inferior Court, to the great alarm and dismay of all traders. An expensive station might be erected and the rates thereby materially increased on all classes of goods, although some of them might not benefit in any way by the erection of a station. It seemed to him that a classification covered terminal charges.

Amendment *moved,*

In page 7, line 26, after ("Part II. Traffic") insert following clause:—"23a. The maximum toll, rate, or charge contained in every Act of Parliament relating to railways and canals in the United Kingdom shall include the charges for station accommodation, use of sidings, weighing, checking, clerkage, lighting, watching, and labelling goods, and no railway company or canal company shall be entitled to make any additional charges for such services or any of them.

"Section two of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1854, shall hereafter be read and construed as if the words 'and provide all reasonable works, machinery, and conveniences' were inserted in the said section immediately after the word 'facilities' and before the words 'for the receiving and forwarding and delivery of traffic.'"—(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

LORD BRABOURNE said, that the 43rd clause contained a definition of "terminal charges," and it would be far more convenient if his noble Friend would postpone the discussion upon this point until the Committee had arrived at that clause. By the 15th clause of the Railway and Canal Traffic Bill, 1873, the Commissioners were empowered to decide disputes as to terminal charges, and their jurisdiction was extended by Clause 10 of the present Bill. It was impossible to add the definitions proposed without creating confusion and inflicting injustice. There was no wish on the part of the Railway Companies to do anything dishonest; but a great many services were now performed by the Railway Companies which were not contemplated when the maximum rates were fixed, and in respect of which they were entitled to some remuneration. It appeared to him that there was no necessity for this new clause, and that the subject was sufficiently dealt with in other parts of the Bill, and, at all events, he urged that any discussion upon these points would be more fitly postponed until the Committee came to the Definition Clause.

LORD HENNIKER said, he supported the Amendment, for he thought the law on the question of terminals was now in a most unsatisfactory condition, and it was desirable the matter should be dealt with. It was quite fair that Railway Companies should be allowed to charge for warehousing; but it was absolutely essential to have a clear definition in the Bill as to what terminal charges were to be.

THE EARL OF DERBY said, he did not object to the principle of the noble Earl's Amendment; but noble Lords sitting in that part of the House were quite in the dark as to the exact nature of his proposal, as they could not hear his statement, and the clause was not on the Paper.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he was not at all sure that the clause, as now framed, would carry out the object the noble Earl had in view, as it would only apply to future Acts of Parliament, and not to those already in existence. With respect to the question of terminals, he (Lord Herschell) agreed that the law with respect to them was in a most unsatisfactory condition, and as it was very desirable that the question should be settled it would be well that the Legislature should deal with them by the Bill.

LORD BRAMWELL said, that the noble Earl's Amendment would have the effect of preventing all Railway Companies from making these charges, notwithstanding that it had been held that the London and Brighton Railway Company had a right, under the terms of their Act, to make terminal charges. The effect of the Amendment, therefore, would be to take from that Company a right which the law said they possessed. For himself, he should have thought that no Railway Company had power to make these charges at present, unless specially empowered by the Act.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN said, he was decidedly of opinion that the subject might be more conveniently discussed when they came to the Definition Clause.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, he opposed the clause on the ground that it was a question which ought to be left to the Commissioners. They ought to have the power of saying whether station accommodation should be paid for or not.

LORD MONK BRETTON suggested that it should be left over for the Report.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Lord STANLEY of PRESTON) said, he fully concurred in the suggestion that that was not the most convenient way of discussing the question, which had better be left for the Definition Clause, or the Report.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, that his opinion was generally in favour of the noble Earl the Mover of the Amendment; but he thought that the least likely way for him to get his view adopted was to force their Lordships to a Division upon his clause.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD said, the object of the Amendment was to say what was not to be included in terminal charges. He did not desire to define what were to be terminal charges.

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, it would be very inconvenient if the Amendment were pressed at this stage. He would appeal to the noble Earl to withdraw it for the present, and to raise the question at the proper time—namely, on the Definition Clause.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD said, he would withdraw the Amendment, and move it again on the Report.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Clause 24 (Revised classification of traffic and schedule of rates).

THE MARQUESS OF TWEEDDALE, in moving an Amendment to leave out the words "applicable thereto," in order to insert "equivalent to such rates and charges," said, he understood that the intention of the noble Lord in charge of the Bill was, that though the rates might be raised in some cases and lowered in others, yet, on the whole, the alteration should not prejudice the Railway Companies. The words "applicable thereto" did not seem to convey that intention very clearly, and he accordingly proposed the substitution of the words of the Amendment. That a new classification was necessary was not the fault of the Railway Companies, but was due to the fact that the present classification was not suitable to the circumstances of the time.

Amendment *moved*, in page 8, line 34, leave out ("applicable thereto") and insert ("equivalent to such rates and charges.")—(*The Marquess of Tweeddale.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, however desirous their Lordships might be not to interfere with the general result of the charges made, or with the rights of the Companies, on the faith of which so great an outlay had been made, he thought the words proposed were too limiting, and would bind more closely than was desirable. The proper words were, in his opinion, such classification as it would, in the opinion of the Board of Trade, be just and reasonable to substitute for the existing maximum rates and charges, having regard to the general result of such rates and charges. While he did not desire to act in a spirit different from that which the noble Marquess gave him credit for, he could not ask the House to accept the Amendment.

LORD BRAMWELL said, the words proposed might not be the best, but they could not be worse than the words in the clause. It was very consolatory to him to learn that the noble Lord (Lord Stanley of Preston) did not propose to reduce the profits of the Railway Companies. It was certain now that Parliament had not reserved to itself the right to reduce those rates, and the only reason for doing so was the great convenience of doing wrong in the matter. He would like to ask the draftsman what definite idea he attached to the words "just and reasonable." What on earth were "just and reasonable charges" in the abstract? He knew what were just and reasonable charges in fact, and they were the charges which, by law, Companies were entitled to make. "Just and reasonable" were equivalent to "fair." Had not their Lordships had enough of that word? Similar difficulties as arose on this word would arise if the words "just and reasonable" remained in the clause.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY) said, that the noble and learned Lord (Lord Bramwell) argued that because the word "fair" in an Act of Parliament had given rise to difficulties, the interpretation of the words "just and reasonable" would occasion similar difficulties. The noble and learned Lord was somewhat sophistical. Would the noble and learned Lord venture to say that even now the Courts of Law had not often to determine the meaning of the phrase "just and reasonable?" His (the Marquess of Salisbury's) own impression was that they often had to do so; and there appeared nothing very extravagant in the idea that future Courts of Law might define it, even as past Courts of Law had already done. He sympathized with the general jealousy of the noble and learned Lord as to any interference with the rights of property; but care must be taken not to strain that principle too far. What had Parliament done with regard to the Railway Companies? It had taken away land belonging to other people and had given it to them at a certain price, and, at the same time, allowed them to charge certain rates in connection with the arrangement. By some that was regarded as a contract binding for all time, upon which those who took part in the enterprize had a right to depend; and if there were no other considerations to be borne in mind he should be very much inclined to share that opinion. But some weight should be given to the fact that Railway Companies were altogether artificial creations, and were, therefore, carried out of the field in which ordinary individuals were dealt with. The main point was, that while there were a number of questions which the Board of Trade, as the organ of Parliament, might be fairly called upon to decide, their Lordships were not by this Bill giving any sanction whatever to the decisions at which the Board of Trade might arrive. All Parliament did was to tell the Board of Trade its opinion as to whether certain charges were, or were not, just and reasonable. If there were any charge which really injured the Railway Companies, or which vitiated the guarantee which Parliament had already given, Parliament would be called upon to refuse to enforce it, lest at some future time a fraud should be committed upon Railway Companies by a strained interpretation. But to refuse to allow the list to be prepared, lest Parliament should be weak enough to commit a fraud on the Railway Companies, appeared to be a very unnecessary distrust of their own Parliamentary powers.

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON accepted the principle of the Amendment, and would be quite willing to insert the necessary words. He hoped, however, that it would be withdrawn, in order that some better form of words might be adopted.

Lord GRIMTHORPE, having referred to the effect of the Act of 1844, said, that while the Bill might not, in direct words, give power to Parliament to reduce the rates of the Railway Companies, it did so in effect. Power would be given to the Board of Trade to recommend a Parliamentary Committee to reduce the rates; and what chance, he would like to know, would a Railway Company have of protecting its interests in a dispute of that kind coming before a promiscuous Committee, mainly consisting of persons who represented everyone but the Railway Companies. It went without saying that they could not put a check on future Parliaments; but he was very desirous to put a check on future Boards of Trade in regard to this matter. By the Act of 1844 it was provided that the rates of Railway Companies should not be reduced, so long as they did not exceed 10 per cent, and the Standing Clause, adopted concurrently with the Act, obviously referred to that revision, and was merely intended to prevent future Companies from slipping more words into their Acts which they might plead against it. Now they barely turned 4 per cent; and if the Board of Trade were to have the power of general revision, they would be empowered to commit what was nothing less than a robbery of the Companies as proprietors of property valued at upwards of £800,000,000. He had an Amendment on the Paper, in words copied from the Act of 1844, that no revision should be made which would be likely to diminish the divisible profits of the Companies.

The Earl of SELBORNE said, that good causes sometimes suffered from over-zealous advocacy. He feared that was the position taken up by his noble and learned Friend (Lord Grimthorpe). He could not agree with his noble and learned Friend, and thought the words "just and reasonable" did afford some protection to the Companies. He was sure that none of their Lordships desired to injure the Railway Companies, in which so many of them were interested. The consideration of the Bill had drifted away from the particular Amendment into a general discussion, and he would suggest that the words "on the whole" should be prefixed to the words proposed to be inserted by his noble Friend. The words would then be—"On the whole equivalent to such rates and charges."

The Marquess of TWEEDDALE said, that although he had no right to speak for the Railway Companies, he might mention that they had no desire whatever to strain their rights. It was quite possible that they were a little sensitive with regard to the interpretation of the words "just and reasonable;" but he did not think their Lordships need be much surprised at that. He was not wedded in any way to particular words of his Amendment; and as he understood the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade had, in effect, accepted the principle of his proposal, he was prepared to withdraw it in favour of such more suitable words as might be suggested.

Viscount CRANBROOK hoped that, as the discussion had proceeded at such length, this point should be now settled. He might incidentally remark, in answer to an observation of the noble and learned Lord behind him (Lord Grimthorpe), that many of their Lordships had very considerable interest in Railway Companies. They, fortunately, had no desire to cheat them.

Amendment, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clause 25 (Undue preference in case of unequal rates and charges and unequal services performed).

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD said, he would move an Amendment with a view to guarding against agreements between a Company and a trader for a secret "drawback."

Amendment *moved,*

In page 9, line 25, after ("lower") insert ("or charges, and whether by way of rebate, discount, drawback, overweight, allowance or otherwise.")—(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he must point out to his noble Friend that if it were entirely secret no Act of Parliament could affect it; but if it could be proved, then it would constitute an undue preference. He would add that the Commissioners had power to compel the Companies to produce their books.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

LORD BRABOURNE said, he would propose an Amendment, the object of which was to limit the operation of the clause relating to "undue preference" to "competing" traders. The clause was framed so as to throw the onus on the party accused of showing that he was not guilty. As this was contrary to the general policy of the English law, they ought to be as careful as possible what they admitted within that rule. The clause, as it stood, might work injustice. The Select Committee of 1882 had reported that "inequalities of charge"—that was, special rates—were often "to the advantage and not to the disadvantage of the public;" and this was undoubtedly the case, and one illustration would be better than a long argument. He knew of a case where a Railway Company charged 2*s.* 6*d.* a-ton for coals carried to one district, while to another district they charged 3*s.* 6*d.* In the one case a constant and large demand for coal by a particular trade justified the lower rate, whilst both rates were well within their legal maximum. In many instances there might very well be good reasons for this difference, such as difference of gradients or a smaller amount of traffic. If they were to say that there must be no difference between rates to traders who were not competing, the simple result would be that the Railway Company would raise its lower rate to the level of its higher one, by which action the trades which had been supplied at the lower rates might be crippled or destroyed. This was an instance of the difficulty of interfering with the details of the internal working of a great industrial undertaking, by which much mischief might be caused.

Amendment *moved,* in page 9, line 27, leave out ("other"), and insert ("competing.")—(*The Lord Brabourne.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he was unable to see any advantage in the proposed Amendment, and he could not help thinking that it was also inconsistent with some of the clauses which their Lordships had already passed.

LORD GRIMTHORPE said, if their Lordships remembered the enormous distances over which some railways extended, he thought they would agree that it did not signify to a trader at one end of the railway what rate a trader at the other end got his goods carried for, so long as he was not a competing trader.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE said, the introduction of the word "competing" would deprive a private person of the advantage of the clause.

Amendment *negatived.*

THE EARL OF JERSEY, in moving, as an Amendment, to omit Sub-section 2, which was as follows:—

"In deciding whether a lower charge or difference of treatment does or does not amount to an undue preference, the Court having jurisdiction in the matter, or the Commissioners, as the case may be, may, so far as they think reasonable, in addition to any other considerations affecting the case, take into consideration whether such lower charge or difference of treatment is necessary for the purpose of securing the traffic in respect of which it is made,"

said, that his object in making this provision was to withhold from the Railway Companies the power of favouring one district at the expense of another, and of giving undue preference to the carriage of foreign produce over our own. If this sub-section remained in the Bill, it would, to a great extent, nullify the 1st sub-section, which was aimed at undue preference. As an instance of the undue preference that now prevailed, he might mention that, whereas the

Railway Companies charged 25*s*. per ton for the conveyance of foreign meat from Liverpool to London, they charged no less than 50*s*. per ton for the carriage of English meat. That was not reasonable treatment which the English trader could put up with. Undue preference was contrary to the Act of 1854; but if this sub-section were passed it would give Parliamentary sanction to what had hitherto been contrary to the intentions of Parliament. He did not urge that there should be equal mileage rate; but he contended that the Commission should be empowered to consider whether every preference was undue or unreasonable. If there were many cases such as he had quoted still in existence, it was not surprising that the great majority of the trading public were of opinion that these rates were contrary to justice. A simple rule ought to be laid down that Railway Companies should not have power to favour one district at the expense of another, or give facilities to one trader that they denied to others, or grant "most favoured nation" treatment to foreign produce.

Amendment *moved*, in page 9, line 35, leave out Sub-section (2).—(*The Earl of Jersey*).

Lord BRAMWELL said, he hoped their Lordships would not accede to the Amendment. In cases where there were differential rates, they were made because the Railway Companies would not otherwise get the traffic. Nothing could better illustrate the unreasonableness of the cry about undue preference than a case which appeared in *The Times* that day. It appeared that coals from North Wales were carried to Birkenhead for 2*s*. per ton for the whole distance, or about ¾*d*. per ton per mile. South Wales coals were taken to Birkenhead, from eight to ten times the distance, for a charge of 6*s*. per ton for the whole distance, or only three times as much as the charge from North Wales. And why was that done? Because, if the Railway Company did not make this reduction in their charge per mile for the long distance coal, that coal would not go to Birkenhead at all, and the only persons benefited would be the North Wales coalowners, who, being freed from the competition with the South Wales coal, would be able to raise their prices. He denied that that would be any benefit to the consumer. It had been said that it was very hard upon the English grazier that American beef should be landed at Liverpool and should be brought by railway thence to London at a lower rate than that paid by the English producer. Why did the Railway Companies carry the American beef at a less rate than English beef? It certainly was not out of any love for the American grazier or the importer; but it was because, if they did not do so, the American beef would go straight to London by ship instead of being landed at Liverpool. That would be a gain, not to the consumer, but to the shipowners who traded between New York and London. These differential rates were made, not for the sake of the persons who appeared to benefit by them, but because the Railway Companies would not get the traffic unless they made them. What would a good *paterfamilias* do in this matter supposing he had the regulation of all these things? Would it not be reasonable of him to say to the South Wales coalowners—"You are at a long distance from an excellent market for your goods, and we will endeavour to give you some compensation by providing that your coals shall be taken to Birkenhead at a less rate than that which is charged the North Wales coalowners." It had been said that the consequence of carrying from a long distance at a low rate was that the Railway Companies were obliged to charge a higher rate for the shorter distance; but it was nothing of the sort. Let him speak with regard to this matter with a cynical plainness. The reason that the Railway Companies charged a high rate to the North Wales coalowner was because they had a right to make that high charge, and could do it, and if they could charge more they would do so; and the reason why they did not charge a higher rate from South Wales was because, though they had a right to charge more, they could not get more; if they could they would. He might take the opportunity of saying, in reply to an observation of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) earlier in the evening, that he did not, for one moment, deny the power of Parliament to modify the railway rates and charges making compensation. He opposed the Amendment, because he believed that the omission of the sub-section would take away from the Railway Companies the right which, according to decisions already given in the Courts of Law upon Acts of Parliament, they possessed, as a means of eking out the miserable dividends they earned. It would entail an absolute loss and detriment upon the consumer, and the only persons who could possibly gain by it would be those who were at a less distance from the markets of consumption than others.

Lord BRABOURNE remarked, that this was not a question between the traders and the Railway Companies, but between the traders and the public, and in justice to the latter he felt bound to oppose the Amendment. Where there was undue preference the law now provided a remedy. He entirely agreed with the noble and learned Lord opposite, that in all cases the Railway Companies charged as high rates as they could charge consistently with the maintenance and development of their traffic; but in the question now before the Committee their interests were identical with that of the public—namely, that by special rates they should be able to bring larger supplies into the markets from a distance. There was no need for any concealment in the matter; every Railway Company desired to get over its line as large an amount as possible of remunerative traffic, but competition kept rates down, and the protest against special low rates for long distances really meant a desire on the part of traders residing near the markets for a protective duty in their own favour. There ought to be some discretion left in the hands of those who managed these great Companies with regard to the regulation of their rates. He strongly supported the retention of the sub-section, and stated that he withdrew his Amendments to it, as they were entirely met by words to which the noble Lord in charge of the Bill had consented, providing that the Commissioners should take into consideration whether lower rates complained of were charged in the interest of the public.

The Earl of SELBORNE said, if the noble Earl (the Earl of Jersey) went to a Division, he should vote with him, on the ground that the 1st sub-section alone would give the proper authority power to take into consideration all reasonable matters. The 2nd sub-section was perfectly new, and went a long way to strike at the present law of undue preference.

Lord HERSCHELL said, that he differed from the view of the noble and learned Earl who had just spoken (the Earl of Selborne). He believed that this question affected trader and trader, district and district, infinitely more than it affected railways, because particular districts and particular traders might be ruined. If the 1st sub-section were passed without qualification, the contest would be no longer between the Railway Companies and the traders. It would be a matter of trader and trader, town and town, district and district, and the whole of the trade of the country would be dislocated. He quite admitted the preferential treatment of foreign goods as against British, which had excited a good deal of feeling. There might be something in the nature of a bounty created by those preferential rates in favour of the foreigner. He would object to exclude from the 2nd sub-section the whole of that case. Suppose a Staffordshire coalowner were to say to a Railway Company—"You bring my coal to London at a higher rate than you charge for Wigan coal. That is an undue preference." How could the Railway Company defend itself? The Railway Company was denied the right of showing that if they charged Wigan coal the same rate of mileage as the Staffordshire coal, the Wigan coal would never come to London at all. What would be the effect on the Wigan coal trade and the Wigan coalowners? The Staffordshire coalowner would benefit, because he would be saved from the competition of the Lancashire coalowner, but what would the Lancashire coalowner say if he were charged a prohibitive rate with regard to the London market? Again, Staffordshire wanted to get its iron to the sea. How was it to compete with the Lancashire ironmaster, who was near to the sea, if there was no difference of rate? In the one case the Staffordshire coalowner would be benefited at the expense of the Lancashire coalowner; in the other, the Lancashire ironmaster would be benefited at the expense of the Staffordshire ironmaster. People were not awake to the effect; they had not thought out how it would work, if every person could claim the same treatment in mileage rates.

Again, Lancashire and Staffordshire were on the same railway, and therefore the Staffordshire coalowner could complain of undue preference shown to his rival, if the Lancashire coalowner was charged a lower mileage rate; but if Yorkshire coal was brought to London at a lower rate he could not complain, because the Yorkshire coal was not carried on the same line of railway. The great reasons which Railway Companies had for charging different mileage rates was to secure traffic, and why should the Legislature step in and interfere to disturb the natural laws that otherwise applied to the case? The more he had considered this matter, the more he had come to the conclusion that it was impossible to conceive how far-reaching the consequences of such interference would be. It would injure trade, it would operate against the interests of particular districts, it would be disastrous to particular traders, and it would be opposed to the interests of the Railway Companies. Moreover, he contended that there was no necessity for this interference. He thought the sub-section needed amendment, to exclude the cases which the noble and learned Lord had referred to, and he should be willing to see the sub-section excluded from particular application to the first case mentioned in the 1st sub-section. The rest of the sub-section ought to stand with the modification that had been suggested. That was to say, that while objecting to the total abolition of the rates, he should be in favour of their abolition so far as they favoured the foreign producer as against the home producer.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, he had listened with great interest to the speech of the noble and learned Lord who had just sat down (Lord Herschell), but he had by no means been convinced by it. The noble and learned Lord commenced by throwing away more than half of his case.

Lord HERSCHELL: Oh, no.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: At any rate, the noble and learned Lord threw away a very important part of his case. He (the Earl of Camperdown) was himself by no means in favour of allowing foreign goods to be carried on more favourable terms than British goods; but, according to the noble and learned Lord's argument, why not? The foreigner had the advantage of his geographical position, to which his noble and learned Friend alluded. Why should he not be allowed the benefit of it?

Lord HERSCHELL: Because he is not subject to the same taxation.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN: That is the old argument of Protection.

Lord HERSCHELL: I should like to explain I did not put this as a matter which I advocated at all. I said myself that, on strict principles of political economy, it might be objectionable; but that there was a very strong feeling in the matter.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, he was content to take the argument that way. He assured his noble and learned Friend that there was a most excessive feeling on the matter throughout the United Kingdom. Many persons seemed to think that the feeling was limited to a small class; but he could assure the noble and learned Lord that he had heard it, not only in agricultural and commercial circles, but elsewhere, over and over again. He must confess that hitherto he heard no sufficient answer to the course which the Railway Companies had taken. The noble and learned Lord admitted, that as this question of carrying foreign goods cheaper than British goods had of late become so unpopular, and had produced such an outcry throughout the country, it might be expedient to withdraw that power from the Railway Companies; but then his second argument was that of the consumer, and he said—"If I am not allowed to carry Wigan coals at a lower rate than Staffordshire, Wigan coals cannot come to London." The consumer did not object to low rates. What the producer said was this—"If you are to be content with a low rate at Wigan, and if it pays you to carry at a low rate from Wigan, why cannot you extend that same rule to me?" The fact was that the Railway Companies appealed to the consumers in the one case, and to their own shareholders in the other. With regard to the Wigan coals, they said to the consumer—"Well, you see, consumer, we are consulting your interest. We Railway Companies are most impartial and patriotic people, and we wish to benefit you." On the other hand, they turned round to the shareholder, and said—

"Oh, shareholders, that is quite true that we make very little profit, or, perhaps, no profit at all out of carrying this Wigan coal; but we will make it up in the rates. We shall put on the Staffordshire coal." Practically, that was what they did, and that was practically what was admitted by the noble and learned Lord, when he said that the Railway Companies charged them rates because they had the power to do it. Another argument that was used was this. Trade had grown up in particular localities on the faith of certain arrangements, and, therefore, Parliament had no power to alter that arrangement. If it were true, as was stated, that preferential arrangements were made for the carriage of coal in favour of the town of Newcastle, as against the town of Hull, were those arrangements to be perpetuated for ever; and if it were true that millions of money had been laid out by the town of Newcastle in the making of railways, was Parliament for that reason to be precluded from insisting that Railway Companies should act in an impartial manner between the town of Newcastle and the town of Hull? Was it not by far the more proper attitude of Parliament to care neither for the town of Newcastle nor for the town of Hull, and to insist that Railway Companies, which were common carriers, and which enjoyed, to a certain extent, a monopoly, should deal fairly and equally between their different customers? The introduction of the principle that lower rates might be charged for the purpose of securing the traffic was absolutely new of railway legislation. Hitherto, the principle had been that rates were to be reasonable; and if now their Lordships said that, in order to secure traffic, Railway Companies might charge one rate in one part of the country, and a different rate in another, they would be taking a highly inexpedient course.

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON said, he joined issue entirely with his noble Friend who had just sat down, and thought the question ought to be considered from the point of view of the consumer as well as of the trader. This was not a question for the carriers, or for the traders. It was undoubtedly a question in which a much larger body, including the consumers, were interested. He sympathized with those who, living in agricultural districts, saw produce from elsewhere pass their doors at cheaper rates than they could supply them. But if there were no differential rates as between long and short distances, enormous injury would be done to several trades—for example, milk, fish, and greengrocery, all of which were exclusively British. The foreign goods carried on our railways bore a very small proportion to the British, being only about 25,000,000 tons as compared with 257,250,000 tons. If this subsection were struck out, their Lordships would deliberately declare that they wished to exclude competition. The complaint of a great many of the deputations which waited upon him was, not that the rates were differential, but that they were not sufficiently differential with regard to long distances. Hitherto, all legislation had been directed against giving a monopoly. Were their Lordships, by throwing out the sub-section, going to turn round and supplant all the decisions which Parliament had arrived at in former times? Competing lines had always been encouraged, and some persons thought they had been almost unduly encouraged; but there was one branch of competition with which no legislation could deal, and that was our insular position. If the sub-section were thrown out, and the Railway Companies were not entitled to lower their rates in any cases, it would only be the Steamship Companies which would be benefited. It was in the interest of the general consumer that the clause was inserted, and he hoped their Lordships would pass it.

On Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause?"

Their Lordships *divided*:—Contents 49; Not-Contents 11: Majority 38.

Amendment *disagreed to.*

Amendment *moved,*

In page 10, line 2, add—"Provided that where for the purpose of securing traffic, or for any other reason, any railway company charge a lower toll or rate than the maximum between two distant places, no person consigning the same class of goods from any intermediate station between such places to the same place of consignment, shall be charged more then is charged between the two such distant places."—(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

Lord BRABOURNE, in opposing the Amendment, desired to give an instance to show how it would work. Two railways ran from London to Bristol, the distance by one being 210, by the other 118 miles. To obtain through traffic, the railway with the longer mileage could only charge the same through rates as its rival. But if, by the noble Earl's clause, it was enacted that everybody who lived on the longer line, it might be 120, 150, or 180 miles from the terminus, should pay no higher rate than this, the result would be that the through traffic low charges would have to be abandoned, and the public would be deprived of the choice of a second route.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Amendment *moved,*

In page 10, line 2, at end of clause add—"Section 2 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1854, shall hereafter be read and construed as if the words 'or at the request of any trader' were inserted in such section immediately after the words 'at the request of any other such company' and before the words 'of through traffic.'"—(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON opposed the Amendment.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 26 (group rates to be chargeable by railway companies).

Amendment *moved,*

In page 10, line 19, at end of clause add—"Where any group rate exists, the consignor of any goods to a point of destination between the group and such point of destination shall not be charged more for the same class of goods than the group rate, and where any imported goods are carried to a group or district at a group rate, no person between the point of importation and the group or place of consignment shall be charged more than such group rate, and no group rate shall affect the tolls as between persons situated within the group as between places within such group."—(*The Earl of Crawford.*)

Lord STANLEY of PRESTON opposed the Amendment, saying the Government could not accept it.

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 27 (Complaints to Board of Trade of unreasonable charges by railway companies).

The Marquess of TWEEDDALE, in moving, said, that under the clause the expenses of the inquiry were to be borne by the Treasury. After the Board of Trade had made the inquiry at the expense of the Treasury, they were practically to get no further, because they had no power whatever to enforce any decision or opinion at which they might have arrived. All they could do was to attempt to reconcile the parties, and if they failed to do that, they had to make a Report to Parliament of every case which came before them. The great objection to the clause was, that it really imposed upon the Board of Trade functions which were entirely foreign to that Department; because every opinion expressed in this capacity by the Board of Trade would be tantamount to a decision on the merits of the case. It could not be otherwise. There would arise this condition of things. There was certain to be a conflict of opinion, if not a conflict of decision; because the Board of Trade would make a Report to Parliament, while the Party aggrieved would probably go before the Commissioners' Court and have his case tried over again, with the probability, or, at any rate, the possibility, of securing an entirely different decision. That could not fail to cause great confusion and litigation of a very harassing character. But not only would it do that, it would impose new and very arduous duties upon a Department of the Government which was already overburdened with work, for there was probably no Department in the country which had to perform more multifarious duties. This Bill would impose upon the Board the very heavy duty of reclassifying, and of revising all the rates and charges of the Railway Companies. That was in itself an enormous additional burden, and one which they would have very great difficulty in coping with. His third objection to the clause was, that it would inevitably encourage litigation, and litigation of a most costly kind. At present, railway litigation was a very expensive matter, and that was its chief check; but this Bill provided a sort of paradise of litigation, for all proceedings before the Board of Trade were to be taken, not at the expense of the parties, but at the expense of the Treasury; and when concluded, this litigation had the disadvantage of not binding the parties by the result. Upon the second reading of the Bill, this Committee of Inquiry was called an Arbitration Court; but it was by no means an Arbitration Court. A Court of Arbitration was a very valuable Court. It had this special advantage, that when a case was decided by it, it was decided for ever, and the parties were bound by the agreement, which could be enforced by a Court of Law. But nothing of the sort could occur in this Court of Inquiry. It was argued that in other countries this Court of Conciliation had answered, for example, in America, where it was first heard of. But the circumstances in America were entirely different. The reason for its establishment there was, because at that time there was no other Court to go to, and certainly so unpractical a proposal as the establishment of a powerless Court alongside a Court of Law would never have entered into the American mind. This Court would have power to annoy Railway Companies and not sufficient power to benefit the public.

Moved, "To omit the clause."—(*The Marquess of Tweeddale.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, that a similar clause was in the Bill of last year; but he felt bound to say there was a great deal to be said from the point of view of the noble Marquess, although its operation might prove exactly opposite to that described by his noble Friend. It was a matter upon which there was a great diversity of opinion, and it was thought that this means of investigating complaints would save the Railway Companies considerable litigation; but if the noble Marquess was of a different opinion, the Government had no desire to support the clause.

LORD HERSCHELL said, he should offer no opposition to the omission.

Motion *agreed to;* Clause *struck out.*

Clause 28 (Annual returns by railway companies to contain such statistics as the Board of Trade shall require).

LORD BRABOURNE, in moving the omission of Sub-section 1, said, it was impracticable, and that it would cause a useless and enormous expense to the Railway Companies.

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, he could not agree to the Amendment, but he would undertake to consider what modification could be made in the words of the Sub-section upon the Report.

Amendment *moved*, in page 11, leave out Sub-section 1.—(*The Lord Brabourne.*)

Amendment *negatived.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 29 (Publication of all tolls and charges).

On the Motion of The Lord BRABOURNE, Clause *struck out.*

Clauses 30 to 32, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Clause 33 (Returns by canal companies).

On the Motion of The Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY, Amendment made, in page 13, line 27, after ("stopped"), insert ("for more than two days").

LORD GRIMTHORPE, in moving to omit Sub-section 5 altogether, contended that it was unnecessary that notice of the stoppage of a canal should be given to the Board of Trade, as the public could be better informed of it by the Canal Company.

Amendment *moved*, in page 13, to leave out Sub-section (5).—(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, that, unfortunately, some canals had got into certain hands in which they were not treated in the most friendly manner. Repairs were sometimes unduly prolonged, and it was desirable the Board of Trade should have notice of the time for which it was intended to stop the canal.

Amendment *negatived.*

LORD GRIMTHORPE also moved to omit Sub-section 6, which made Companies and their officers, failing to comply with the requirements of the section, and not giving the Board of Trade the notices therein enumerated, liable to a penalty of £5.

Amendment *moved*, in page 13, to leave out Sub-section (6).—(*The Lord Grimthorpe.*)

LORD STANLEY OF PRESTON said, there was no way of enforcing the provisions of the section. But he promised to re-consider it.

Amendment (by leave of the Committee) *withdrawn.*

Clause, as amended, *agreed to.*

Clauses 34 to 48, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Postponed Clause 20 *agreed to.*

Further Amendments made.

The Report of the Amendments to be received on *Thursday* the 21*st instant;* and Bill to be *printed* as amended. (No. 60.)

CENTRAL ASIA—AFGHANISTAN—PROCLAMATION OF A HOLY WAR.

QUESTION.

The Earl of CRAWFORD asked the Secretary of State for India, Whether the Indian Government had received any information as to the reported proclamation of a Holy War against Russia by the Ameer of Afghanistan, and the alleged disturbances in that country, as stated in recent telegrams in the public Press?

The SECRETARY OF STATE for INDIA (Viscount Cross): My Lords, I am not unaware of the rumours as to the proclamation of a Holy War to which the noble Lord refers, but I do not attach importance to them. They have not been in any way confirmed, or even commented upon by the Government of India, and I do not believe that the Ameer of Afghanistan has any hostile intentions whatever towards Russia. With regard to the alleged disturbances in Afghanistan, some rumours were reported to the Indian Government a short time ago, but of late no more has been heard of them, and I have reason to suppose that tranquillity has been maintained.

ALLOTMENTS—LEGISLATION.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: I rise to ask the Prime Minister whether the Government intend to bring in a Bill this Session dealing with the question of allotments? I ask the Question because it seems to me that an Answer given a short time ago to a similar Question was somewhat ambiguous. The Lord President of the Council said it would not be brought in before Easter, but he did not say whether it would be brought in after Easter. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) declared that the introduction of such a Bill would depend upon the state of Business in "another place," and that he could not pledge himself to anything definite. This question of allotments is one of great importance. It affects the welfare of a large and well-deserving set of men, and I venture to think it affects us on this side of the House, and our credit as a Party who are anxious, as far as practicable, to fulfil in Parliament pledges which we have made in the country. No question of domestic policy, leaving Ireland on one side, has attracted so much attention as this question of allotments. The Prime Minister mentioned it long ago in his speech at Newport. It was given a prominent place in the Dartford speech of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, a speech in which he set out the programme of the Government. That programme was fully endorsed by the present Leader of the House of Commons, who, shortly after the Dartford speech, declared that Lord Randolph Churchill spoke with the "knowledge and assent and consent" of all his Colleagues. The Government fulfilled their pledges to a certain extent by giving the question of allotments a prominent place in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. I believe a great expectation has been raised in the minds of the agricultural population on this question. With few exceptions there is a concensus of opinion that a large and comprehensive measure—a measure containing provisions which ensure that labourers can obtain sufficient allotments at reasonable rents—is desirable and necessary; and I am sure that such a measure will have the best effect on the population, will educate them in the best sense of the word in self-respect and self-reliance, and make them feel that a responsibility rests upon them as respectable citizens, and will not fail to have a good effect in giving stability and vitality to the whole land system. I can well understand that there will be great difficulty in getting many measures through the other House, but that difficulty is all the more reason for bringing a measure of this kind into this House. We have ample time. We have passed measures of great importance, and we have two Bills of first-class importance before us now, one dealing with land in Ireland and the other dealing with the transfer of land—a Bill which affects primarily the landlords—and I think it would be an expedient thing that a Bill of this kind affecting those engaged in agriculture at the other extreme of the social scale should be brought into Parliament this Session. I hope the Government will recognize the importance of this question and will introduce a Bill of this kind into this House, and even if it passes this House and does not pass the other, I do not see that the question would be any worse off than if it was not included at all.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): I quite concur with my noble Friend as to the great importance of this subject, and that it is one of the subjects which the Government hoped to have dealt with; but, whatever its importance, nothing will make it pass through Parliament this Session unless the state of Business in the other House is such as to enable the Government to carry it through. I am afraid that in the present state of affairs I cannot give any other answer to my noble Friend than that which I gave the other night, that such a Bill depends upon the state and progress of Business in the other House.

House adjourned at a quarter before Nine o'clock, to Monday the 18th instant, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 1*st April*, 1887.

MINUTES.] — Private Bill (*by Order*) — *Second Reading*—Metropolitan Railway.*
Public Bills — *Ordered — First Reading* — Criminal Law Amendment [217] [*Fifth Night*].
Provisional Order Bills — *Ordered — First Reading*—Local Government * [216].
Second Reading—Metropolitan Police.*
Report—Local Government (Ireland) (Carrick-on-Suir) * [200].

QUESTIONS.

BURIALS ACT—BOLTON-ON-DEARNE BURIAL GROUND.

Mr. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the following statements, in a letter to *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* of 28th March, headed "Bolton-on-Dearne Burial Ground," and signed "G. Whitlam," are accurate:—

> "The churchyard is full, and has been for years, and every interment means a sight more or less distressing to ordinary human instincts. It is impossible to select a grave space where a corpse has not been previously interred. The consequence is, that every new grave means the disinterment of human remains;"

and, if so, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The Inspector reported as to this burial ground in December last, after having made a personal inspection, accompanied by the Local Authorities. The Inspector recommended that an Order in Council should issue discontinuing burials in the parish church forthwith, and in the churchyard after the 1st of September, 1887. The necessary notices were forthwith given, and ultimately a representation was made to Her Majesty in Council, and I hope that the Order will be made at the next meeting of the Council.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (SCOTLAND) —PAISLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether the attention of the Scotch Education Department has been called to a Memorial from the School Board of Paisley, asking the withdrawal by the Department of a Report, made by Professor Roberts, of St. Andrews, on the French and German section of Paisley Grammar School, on the ground that it deals unjustly with that section of the school, and reflects unmerited censure on its teacher, and that it was based on a perfunctory examination by an examiner unskilled in modern languages; whether it is true as alleged that, among other things, in the course of his examination of a French class, the Inspector recorded a mistake against each of a class of 30 pupils, because they pronounced *hier* (yesterday) with the "h" mute and the "r" audible, instead of the reverse, and that, in examining in German, pupils were marked as in error because they correctly gave *gebracht* and not *gebrungen* as the past participle of *bringen*; whether the examiner in question is regularly or only occasionally employed on examination duty of the Department; and, whether the Scotch Education Department have taken, or will take, steps to test the accuracy of the statements made in the Memorial of the School Board of Paisley, and the evidence therein referred to?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): The Scotch Education Department, at the request of the School Board, appointed examiners for the inspection of the Paisley Grammar School, one of whom was Professor

Birrell, of St Andrews; and owing to his sudden illness, their Lordships adopted the suggestion that Professor Roberts, who had at the request of the School Board examined the school on several previous occasions, should take his place. Their Lordships have received a Memorial as described from five of the School Boards, and also one from a minority of four expressing agreement with the Report. Having appointed as examiner a gentleman of position which warranted belief in his fitness, and who possessed apparently the confidence of the School Board, their Lordships' function is at an end, and they have no means of testing statements made with reference to the Report.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—COLLECTION OF RATES IN NEW ROSS UNION BY THE POLICE.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Is it the fact that 150 police have been employed collecting poor rates in New Ross Union, or what number have been so employed; is it true that many ratepayers distrained upon were never asked for the rates till the police seized; is it the case that the cost of the police in this work is estimated at £250, while the amount collected by them was only about £30; if not, what are the relative figures; did Mr. Wall, one of the Vice Guardians, sent down to supersede the elected Board, resign, and why; when it is intended to allow a new Board to be elected to conduct the affairs of the union; and, in the case of the suspension of the Carrick-on-Suir Board, in 1881-2, did the Local Government Board withdraw the Vice Guardians after the expiry of the year of office of the suspended Guardians?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The police were employed in protecting the poor rate collector in the New Ross Union, who reports that it is not a fact that he distrained without having given previous notice for the rates. The amount realized was £80, not £30, as stated in the Question. The cost was about £127. It is true that Mr. Wall, one of the Vice Guardians, resigned. I do not feel called upon to state his reasons for taking that step. The Local Government Board do not feel that they would be justified at present in authorizing the election of Guardians. They cannot say when they may be able to do so. In the Carrick-on-Suir case, the Local Government Board were able to allow the Guardians to be re-appointed in about eight months after the dissolution.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked, whether the Local Government Board had any objection to examination into the question whether there was any ground for supposing that a new Board, newly elected, would persist in the alleged misconduct?

[Reply inaudible.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND)—VOTING PAPERS AT GLENGARIFFE, CO. CORK.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Constable Lark, who is stationed at Glengariffe, County Cork, left a voting paper at the Eccles Hotel; whether, not having received the paper on the proper day, he again called for it on the following day, contrary to the general Regulations of the Local Government Board for Ireland; and, whether, having regard to the fact that an objection has been made to the votes of Mrs. Eccles for the reason here stated, he will direct that they shall be disallowed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that the constable did call a second time for the voting paper, as stated, leaving the legal point to be decided by the Returning Officer. But as the votes were given for the defeated candidate, they did not affect the result.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—EXTENSION OF DELIVERY IN CO. CAVAN.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is true that an offer was made by F. J. Tully, of Drumcam, Ballyhaise, County Cavan, to guarantee the Department against loss if a rural delivery were extended to Keelagh National School from Ballyhaise and Ardamagh; and, whether, if the facts are as alleged, he will give the extension a three months' trial?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I cannot find that an offer has been received from Mr. Tully to guarantee the payment of any loss involved in the proposed extension of post to Keelagh National School. But as the deficiency of revenue is trifling, I have given directions for the extension to be made without calling for a guarantee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND)—POOR LAW GUARDIANS AT BANNBOY.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, on the 14th March, at Bannboy, after the usual weekly meeting of the Board had separated, a number of members constituted themselves a Board without the usual notice, the chair having been taken by a Guardian who was neither Chairman, Deputy Chairman, nor Deputy Vice Chairman; whether the meeting of Guardians so constituted signed a cheque for £8 to assist one Gillooly to emigrate; and, whether, if the facts are as stated, the parties who signed the cheque will be made responsible by the Local Government Board?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that the cheque referred to was duly signed by two Guardians during the regular sitting of the Board; but that after the meeting had been dissolved it was discovered that the Chairman had omitted to sign it. It was under these circumstances that the meeting was reconstituted for the purpose of completing the transaction. The proceeding was certainly informal, but the Local Government Board do not think it necessary to take any action in the matter. If the legality of the payment is questioned by any persons affected, they may bring the subject under the notice of the Auditor of Union Accounts.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE SOUTH KENSINGTON EXHIBITIONS—FREE POSTAGE.

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Postmaster General, If it is true, as stated in the Press, that it has been customary, while the various South Kensington Exhibitions have been in existence, to allow free postage to the officials engaged in their management and direction; if so, to what amount and by whose authority; and, whether, with the exception of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, those Exhibitions were purely private enterprises, in the conduct of which all letters were as liable to postage tax as the letters of any of Her Majesty's subjects?

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that Question, may I ask whether free postage is also allowed to the official begging letters of the Imperial Institute?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I will ask the hon. Member to give Notice of the Question. In reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Rochester, I have to state that it is the case that in certain instances the Treasury has granted to the Commissioners representing the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 free postage in respect of the correspondence connected with the business of certain Exhibitions to which my hon. Friend refers. In 1883 the Fisheries Exhibition was allowed free postage to the amount of £1,096. In 1884 the International Health Exhibition was allowed free postage to the amount of £3,870. In 1885 the Treasury refused to grant free postage to the Inventions Exhibition. In 1886 a limited concession was allowed to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition—namely, correspondence from the Exhibition only was permitted to go free. The estimated amount of this was £8,500. In the present year the inland correspondence for the International Exhibition at Adelaide is being permitted to go free. As regards the last part of the Question of my hon. Friend, I can only state that these cases have to be decided as they arise, and the decision rests with the Treasury.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the case of the Dublin Exhibition of 1882 the Government refused to allow free postage; and will he include that in his list?

Mr. RAIKES: I have already said that the Treasury, from time to time, has exercised its discretion in refusing, or granting, these appeals. In the case of the Inventions Exhibition in London, the Treasury refused to grant free postage; and I have no doubt the hon. and learned Member is correct in what he states as to the Dublin Exhibition.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Postmaster General will be able to say, with reference to the Dublin Exhibition of 1882, whether the promoters of that Exhibition did not decline the patronage of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen?

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the Treasury, in granting this free postage, exercised their discretion under any statutory authority, or under a claim of inherent right?

MR. RAIKES: That is a Question that I cannot answer, and it must be directed to the First Lord of the Treasury.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I give Notice that I shall ask the First Lord of the Treasury that Question on a later day.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) gave Notice that on the Estimates he would call attention to this scandal.

BURMAH — COVENANTED CIVIL SERVANTS AS VOLUNTEERS.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether any members of the Covenanted Civil Services are, or have been, employed as Military Volunteers in Burmah; and, if so, in what capacity, their names, at what rates of pay and allowances?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): No; but Covenanted Civil Servants have, on some occasions, had to accompany the military columns in the discharge of their Civil duties.

INDIA—THE NATIVE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether any Native newspaper from Madras is filed in the Office of the Secretary of State for India?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): No; but the contents of the Vernacular Press in all parts of India are regularly brought under the consideration of the Secretary of State.

EGYPT (FINANCE, &c.)—REPAYMENT OF THE COUPON TAX.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the decision of the Egyptian Government to repay the Coupon Tax was arrived at without consultation with the British Government; whether any Representative of the British Government assented to this arrangement; and, whether, before this arrangement is finally carried out, the House of Commons will be afforded an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the financial condition of Egypt?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Questions of the hon. Member appear to be founded on a misapprehension. The repayment of the 5 per cent deducted in 1885 for two years from the interest of the Unified Debt of Egypt in order to relieve her finances, did not require consultation with the British Government, or the assent of its Representatives; nor should the House of Commons, by any expression of its opinion, or by any vote, interfere with that transaction. As there is still such misapprehension, notwithstanding repeated explanations, perhaps the House will allow me to state what are the facts. The repayment of the tax on the coupons is not optional, but the fulfilment of an international arrangement, to which Great Britain is a party. By the Declaration of March 17, 1885, the Governments of Great Britain and the other Great Powers, with the sanction of the Porte, declared that they accepted the provisions of a Draft Decree annexed to the Declaration. That Decree was subsequently also accepted by all the other Powers, and was issued by the Khedive on the 27th of July, 1885. Article 21 provides that the surplus revenues of the years 1885 and 1886 shall remain in the hands of the Caisse till the 15th of April, 1887, and shall then be applied, in the first instance, to the repayment of the deductions from the coupons of the Debt. The amount of the surplus being known to be more than sufficient for the purpose, the Egyptian Government have simply given the necessary directions for carrying into effect the arrangement made two years ago. The existence of a surplus available for the repayment of the coupons affords one part of the existing evidence of the financial, economic, and material improvement of Egypt during the last two years.

ADMIRALTY—THE FLOATING DOCK AT HAULBOWLINE.

Dr. KENNY (Cork, S.) (for Dr. Tanner) (Cork Co., Mid) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Why the southern bank at the eastern end of the floating dock at Haulbowline is left unfinished; why is this part of the dock not built up and protected with masonry, as has been done for the remaining three sides of the western portion of the southern side (enclosing the entrance to the dry dock); if the unfinished portion is the site of entrance to the proposed, but now abandoned, second dry dock; what will be the length and depth of channel required to be excavated and dredged in order to permit the passage of ships from the channel of the river to the floating dock; what class of ships of war will the floating dock accommodate; how long will it take to complete the above-mentioned channel; and, what class of ships of war will the dry dock accommodate?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The reason why the southern bank was left unfinished is because it would be the site of the entrance to a second dry dock, if one should ever be required. This second dry dock was never actually proposed to be carried out, though room was left for it. Its construction has, therefore, not been abandoned. The length of the channel to be made to permit the passage of ships from the channel of the river to the floating dock will be about 200 yards, and 20 feet in depth of mud will have to be excavated. It is calculated that it will take about 12 working months to complete this work. The floating and dry docks will accommodate any ship in Her Majesty's Navy.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked, if they had begun to dredge the entrance to the docks?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON said, he could not say; but money had been taken for the purpose in the present year.

Dr. KENNY asked if the noble Lord could say when the work would be commenced?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON said, it would be carried out before the end of the year. If the hon. Member wanted detailed information on the subject, he would be happy to give it to him.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND)—ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE TOWN COMMISSIONERS OF PORTADOWN.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the abstract of accounts of the Town Commissioners of Portadown, as published in *The Portadown and Lurgan News*, is a true statement for the year ending 31st December, 1886; whether the receipts of the markets are correctly put down as £386 0*s.* 1*d.*, and the expenses of the markets at £421 11*s.* 6*d.*; whether the sum of £209 for law costs, out of an income of rates of £908 7*s.* 8*d.*, is a permissible expenditure of the public money; whether the lawyer's bill of costs was taxed; and, if not, why not; and, whether he can explain the certificates of the auditor in the abstract referred to, that the Commissioners received on foot of county contracts £1,046 16*s.* 2*d.*, and expended in county contracts £317 6*s.* 4*d.*, in the year ending 31st December, 1886?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed by the auditor that the figures are correctly stated. It appears that the expenses of the markets included the payment of outstanding accounts of the previous year, and likewise that the account of law costs had been accumulating for some time. The bill of costs was taxed. As regards the items relating to county contracts, it appears that the practice is that any expenditure incurred by the Commissioners after July is not paid by the county until the March following. The accounts are open to the inspection of all persons interested for seven days before every audit.

POLICE PROTECTION (IRELAND)—POLICE HUT AT DRUMCRUMAN, LOWER DRUMREILLY, CO. LEITRIM.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a police hut has been erected in Drumcruman, Lower Drumreilly, County Leitrim, for the protection of two brothers named Gilheany, one of them a bailiff; whether, in connection with a murderous assault on a man named Flynn, the Gilheanys were sentenced some years ago to a term of nine months' imprisonment each; and, from what source will the cost of the hut and the extra police come?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): Reference has been made to the locality for this information; but the reply has not yet been received.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE NORTH DOWN MILITIA.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to a report in *The Newtownards Chronicle* of the 19th instant, of a special meeting of the Newtownards Town Commissioners, convened for the purpose of taking into consideration the removal from their town of the North Down Militia for annual training; whether he can state the number of years during which the North Down Militia have been brought to Newtownards for their annual training there; whether General Moore, late Commander of the 83rd Regimental District, was assured by a deputation from the Town Commissioners that it was their desire to have the Militia retained in their town; whether every facility was invariably given to the Adjutant (Major Hamilton) by the Commissioners, and both the open and inclosed "Market Squares" were always placed at his disposal when required for the use of the regiment; whether in Newtownards there was one of the best rifle ranges in Ireland; and, whether, before making any permanent change, he will cause inquiry to be made into the matter, and give the Town Commissioners of Newtownards an opportunity of being heard in answer to any complaints which may have been made, privately or otherwise, against the conduct of the inhabitants towards the Militia, or as to the unsuitability of the town for training purposes?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY (Mr. BRODRICK) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said: Donaghadee has been chosen for the training this year of the 3rd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, as a healthy place, with a good camping ground and proper facilities for drill. In these respects Newtownards will not compare favourably. It is too late to make any alteration as regards the present year; but I shall be quite prepared, with reference to the future, to consider any representations which the authorities of Newtownards may wish to make; the points they would have to prove being that they can offer suitable drill and camping grounds. I must add that the market squares do not fulfil this condition.

INLAND REVENUE—ASSESSMENT OF INCOME FROM FOREIGN SOURCES.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Income Tax Collectors are authorised to assess and press for the tax on incomes which have already paid their assessment elsewhere; whether he is aware that incomes, including pensions, which are derivable from the East Indies, and which pay Income Tax there, are again taxed in this country; and, whether, if the Income Tax Collectors are acting according to their instructions in pressing for the tax on an income which has elsewhere been subjected to this Duty, he will take steps to remedy this apparent injustice?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): In reply to the hon. and gallant Gentleman, I have to say that the Income Tax Acts take no cognizance of the fiscal laws of other countries. The tax is levied on all incomes above a certain amount received in this country, without regard to the source from which they are derived. For purposes of taxation, India, having its own separate system of finance, must be regarded as quite distinct from the United Kingdom. With regard to the last paragraph, I am afraid that the course which the hon. and gallant Gentleman wishes me to take would be striking at the general principle upon which the Income Tax is levied, and cannot be adopted without opening the door to other exemptions. The administration of the Income Tax is rendered peculiarly difficult by any exemptions.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—LORD CORK'S ESTATE IN VENTRY—OBSTRUCTION OF POLICE.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If 150 persons, from Ballyferriter, have been summoned to the Dingle Petty Sessions for obstruction of the Sheriff and police during the recent evictions, or proposed evictions, on Lord Cork's property in Ventry; whether any hurt or violence resulted from the demonstrations of the tenantry on that occasion; whether Lord Cork, through his agent Mr. Kearney, has amicably settled with his tenants there; and, what is the purpose, under the circumstances, of the proposed prosecution of 150 people?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I have called for a Report into this matter; but there has not been time for its receipt.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON asked, If the right hon. Gentleman knew if the Petty Sessions would come off before he received the Report?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said, he hoped to have the Report by Monday.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—CUMULATIVE SENTENCES FOR ASSAULTS.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the judgment of David Ross, esquire, Q.C., Recorder of Belfast, in the case of an appeal of Robert J. M'Connell from the decision of the Borough Magistrates of Belfast, heard by him on the 10th instant; whether Robert J. M'Connell had been sentenced by the Borough Magistrates to 13 months' imprisonment for assaults committed on different policemen on the occasion of his arrest; whether, on appeal, the Recorder reduced the sentence to six months' imprisonment, and stated that he (the Recorder) considered that there was only one offence committed; whether Mr. Justice Day, when presiding at the Riots Commission in Belfast, expressed himself very strongly against cumulative sentences for such offences, when only one offence was really committed; whether Robert Comerford, of Carrick Hill, was, on the 21st July last, sentenced by the Magistrates presiding at Belfast Police Court to 29 months' solitary confinement, with hard labour, for having assaulted, at the time of his arrest, five different policemen, who were endeavouring to take him a prisoner to the police barrack; whether it is a fact that Robert J. M'Connell is a Protestant, and that Robert Comerford is a Catholic; whether he can state any case where Magistrates at Petty Sessions in England gave such cumulative sentences to persons convicted of assault or other offences; and, whether, now that Robert Comerford has already suffered eight months' imprisonment, with hard labour, for this assault, he will consider the justice of carrying out the remainder of his term of imprisonment?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that the facts are substantially as stated with regard to M'Connell. I am not aware whether Mr. Justice Day expressed the opinion mentioned. With regard to the case of Robert Comerford, it was proved to the satisfaction of the presiding Magistrates that five separate and distinct assaults, of a more or less serious character, had been committed, and the charges were dealt with accordingly. I have no power to interfere with the sentence, and it is no part of my duty to review it. But it is, of course, open to the prisoner, or any person in his behalf, to appeal to the Lord Lieutenant for a mitigation of it. With regard to the religious professions of the persons concerned, the Magistrate informs me that he did not concern himself with this; but he has reason to believe the men are of the respective faiths stated.

POLICE (IRELAND)—PASSENGERS TO IRELAND—SEARCH OF LUGGAGE.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) (for Dr. TANNER) (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether all passengers arriving in Cork from England are liable to have their portmanteaux and packages opened by the police, and their contents emptied out and not necessarily re-packed; whether the same method of procedure is carried out as regards passengers going to Dublin from England by the Mail or London and North-Western Steamers; whether an English gentleman named Williams, on his arrival in Cork from Milford on the morning of Sunday the 13th ultimo, had his portmanteaux and packages opened, and the contents strewn about the deck by two detectives in plain clothes; whether it is usual for policemen in plain clothes to search passengers' luggage on arrival in the port of Cork; and, whether he will inquire into the circumstances of the case?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that passengers' luggage is not examined by the police at Cork, but that it is sometimes examined by Customs officers at the request of the police. This was done in the case of Mr. Williams, referred to in the Question. The luggage of passengers going to Dublin from England is examined when the Police Authorities think it necessary.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—REFUSAL TO ARREST A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST.

Mr. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Sub-Constable Dorney, of Kilteely, County Limerick, refused to aid in the arrest of the Reverend Matthew Ryan, on last Monday; whether the reason given for his refusal was that he would never aid in the unjust arrest of a Roman Catholic priest; whether, in consequence of his refusal, he has been arrested; whether the Police Regulations enable any member of the Force to resign at any time; and, whether the refusal of the Sub-Constable to act was a virtual, if not an actual, resignation; and, if so, by whose authority was the arrest effected?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that Dorney did refuse to aid in the execution of a warrant for the arrest of the Rev. Mr. Ryan, giving as his reason that he had a conscientious objection to do so. The constable has not been placed under arrest; but he has been dismissed. He was of indifferent character, and has been for some time under warning for dismissal for drunkenness. It is not a fact that the Police Regulations enable any member of the Force to resign at any time. A month's notice is required, though not always insisted on.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT YOUGHAL—INJURIES TO THE POLICE.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) (for Dr. Tanner) (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What was the character of the wounds stated to have been inflicted on the police during the recent police assault in Youghal, which resulted in the death of Hanlon; what was the technical medical description of each case; and, was any man confined to the house while under treatment for the alleged wounds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I have asked for the specific details which the hon. Member wishes to obtain; but there has not been time for the receipt of a reply.

EGYPT (FINANCE, &c.)—THE LAND TAX, &c.)—POWER OF THE CAISSE.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in Egypt, the Caisse has power to interfere in administrative functions, and to refuse to allow the reduction of the Land Tax proposed by the Earl of Northbrook, approved by the Government, and tacitly accepted by the Powers as part of the arrangements on which the Convention of 1885 was founded; and, whether the £250,000, which was devoted to hiring labour in place of the *corvée*, was assigned in addition to the £5,200,000 already allowed for administrative expenses; and, if not, whether, by the exaction of the full Land Tax, without the contemplated reduction, the gross revenue, out of which the full coupons are being paid, has been increased, while the Egyptian cultivators are deprived of the intended alleviations of the Land Tax?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, E.): I beg to be excused from stating a general opinion respecting the extent of the powers possessed by the Caisse of the Public Debt of Egypt. Those powers are conferred by the Law of Liquidation, and by several International stipulations. As a matter of fact, the Commissioners have not refused to allow a reduction of the Land Tax; but have agreed with the Egyptian Government upon a different arrangement. It has been settled that the sum of £250,000 spent last year in hired labour employed in clearing the canals in lieu of forced labour shall be paid out of the Revenue of the year, in addition to the sum of £5,237,000 allowed for administrative expenses. The reduction of the Land Tax contemplated by the Powers originally was £450,000. But the state of the Revenue did not justify so large a reduction; and ultimately it was agreed that, of the money available, £250,000 should be devoted to the abolition of the *corvée*, which was an addition to the Land Tax, operating with great hardship and inequality on the cultivators, and actually diminishing the public Revenue by injuring the cultivation of the lands held by the impressed labourers. The remissions of Land Tax, in addition to this measure of relief, were to be confined to those cases in which the tax, or the full amount of it, was practically irrecoverable.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked, whether any further Papers on the question would be laid before the House? Those which they had stopped short of the information he wished for.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Yes, Sir; and on pages 17 and 58 of those recently issued the hon. Member will find a complete description of this matter. There are some further financial Papers in preparation.

WAR OFFICE — ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT—RETURN OF GUNS.

Mr. FELL PEASE (York, N.R., Cleveland) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether the figures in Mr. Burdett's letters, published in *The Times* of 3rd and 31st January and 24th February, are correct; whether the Return of Guns, dated 12th May, 1884, includes "the number, value, and description of guns manufactured and supplied" by the War Department to the Navy during the years 1877-84, inclusive, or merely the expenditure for naval use; and, could he state what is the money value of the machine-guns included in the total of £1,114,504, and taken credit for yearly in the War Office Estimates during the years 1877-84?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. Northcote) (Exeter): The figures are quoted from Parliamentary Papers, and are, therefore, correct, although, as previously stated, they do not refer to the same class of subjects. The Return of Guns, dated May, 1884, relates to expenditure on new iron and steel guns for naval use. The money value of machine-guns, included in the total of £1,114,504, is £234,349.

FISHERMEN ON THE NORTH-EAST COAST—TENURE OF DWELLINGS.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been directed to the unsatisfactory tenure and condition of many fishermen's dwellings on the North-East Coast; and, if he can say whether the Government intend to deal with the question in connection with a Local Government Bill, by an extension of the Agricultural Holdings Act, or otherwise, during the present Session of Parliament?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities), in reply, said, he had received no Notice of the Question before he saw it on the Paper. He must, therefore, ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone it for a day or two.

ADMIRALTY — THE COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS—NAVAL CONTRACTS.

Mr. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, If he intends to carry out the recommendation of the Committee on Contracts, that the purchase of hulls and machinery, with the contracts of the Works Department, shall in future be entrusted to the Director of Contracts?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The recommendation alluded to was the only one upon which the Members of the Committee were not unanimous. While this Committee were sitting, the Controller of the Navy made a number of alterations in the procedure hereafter to be observed in inviting, tabulating, and deciding upon tenders for the construction of the hulls and machinery of vessels. We propose to take action on the other parts of their valuable Report by a speedy adoption of the bulk of their proposals; but we hope that the new Regulations laid down by the Controller will accomplish the object of that part of the Report to which the Question refers.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED OUTRAGE ON A GIRL IN TIPPERARY.

Mr. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he will inform the House at what time, and in what district of the County of Tipperary, the outrage occurred, described by him as having been committed "on a respectable girl by one John Hogan;" and, when and where did Hogan's trial take place?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.), in reply, said, the outrage referred to occurred in the district of Tipperary on the 1st of November last, and the trial took place at the recent Spring Assizes at Clonmel.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford N.) asked, if the right hon. Gentleman would consult with Messrs. Ryan, Q.C., and Lynch, Q.C., the Crown Prosecutors for that Circuit, and inform the House if the statement he gave was correct?

[No reply.]

INDIA (FINANCE, &c.)—USER OF SURPLUS BALANCES.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether it is the case that the India Council largely supplements its revenue by lending out, for short and varying periods, upon Indian Government Securities, the greater part of its surplus balances; and, whether, with a view to the increase of the Imperial Revenue, and to the reduction of the interest on the National Debt, he will consider the expediency of pursuing a like course as regards the large surplus balances on hand from time to time, as set forth in the Bank of England Returns, under the head of "Public Deposits," and of making temporary loans upon Imperial Government Securities?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): It is the practice of the Secretary of State in Council to lend his surplus balances for short periods; but it can hardly be said that the result is "largely" to supplement the revenue, the average amount received on this account being only about £24,000 per annum. With respect to "Public Deposits" at the Bank of England, it is to be noted that they include the balance of the Council of India and other cash balances on the Public Accounts, besides the Exchequer balance. These other balances, which constitute a material part of "Public Deposits," are not generally in excess of the requirements of the various Public Departments; and it is only for a short period in the year—that is, towards its close—that the Exchequer balance is in any way excessive. The question, however, of balances generally is one well deserving of consideration. It has already engaged my attention, and I hope arrangements may be made in the direction of reducing the balances.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE—TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, referring to his statement in February last, in reply to the hon. Member for Canterbury, that the charge for a telegraphic message on its way from London to Australia is 75 centimes per word from Bombay to Madras, while a local message over the same wires in India is only 22½ centimes per word, Will he arrange that a responsible Representative from India be present at the Colonial Conference, with a view to have the grievance remedied?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): It is not intended that the Government of India should be officially represented at the Colonial Conference; but the Secretary of State will be ready to furnish the Members of the Conference with all possible information.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1886 — AMENDMENT OF SECTION 6.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to introduce, or give facilities for, a measure to amend Section 6 of the Crofters Act, 1886, to enable the Crofters Commission to protect crofters from being sued for non-payment of arrears of rent and made bankrupts, and consequently being removed from their holdings pending the hearing of their applications under that Act; whether the Crofters Commission have sat for six months, and during that time have only determined about 60 applications to have fair rents fixed; and, whether there are several thousand such applications still pending?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): In reply to the first part of the hon. Member's Question, I must refer him to the answer given on the 21st of February last by the then Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) to a similar Question—namely—

"That, while anxious to facilitate the fixing of a fair rent, he was not, as at present advised, prepared to re-open the question by fresh legislation."

The Government still adhere to the above decision. With regard to the second part of the Question, the Crofters Commission has been sitting since the 13th of October last, and has disposed of many more than 60 applications to fix fair rents. I must also refer the hon. Member to the Lord Advocate's answer to a Question addressed to him by the hon. Member himself so lately as the 22nd of last month, which was to the effect that to state the number of applications to fix a fair rent which had been determined would be misleading at the present time, as a very large number of cases were far advanced, although not actually decided, and that the decisions were in many cases delayed at the request of the parties themselves. A large number of applications to fix fair rents are still pending; but the Commissioners are making rapid progress.

THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND — ATTENDANCE OF JUDGES.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the practice for Her Majesty's Judges in Great Britain to attend meetings of the Privy Council; and, if not, whether he will state the reason for the attendance of Her Majesty's Judges in Ireland at the meetings of the Privy Council in Dublin?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member is probably not aware that the Privy Council in England meets exceedingly rarely. In Ireland the functions of the Privy Council are confined to advising the Lord Lieutenant on matters on which His Excellency is entitled to, and requires, their advice, which are, in fact, questions for judicial decision. Judges who are Members of the Privy Council are entitled to attend; but they take no part in administrative or political business.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question, whether in this country it is customary for the Judges to attend the Privy Council?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Whenever the Privy Council is summoned as a Council, Judges who are Members attend.

Mr. MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked, whether it was the duty of the Privy Council, as a Privy Council, to solicit personal interviews with the Lord Lieutenant on any matter of State, and to inform and advise the Lord Lieutenant, if necessary, to institute a prosecution; and, whether the Attorney General for Ireland was invariably a Member of the Privy Council; whereas the Attorney General for England was not invariably a Member?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman has asked me a series of Questions, and I must ask Notice of them.

Mr. MAC NEILL: Certainly.

THE MINISTRY—THE LAND BILL AND PURCHASE BILL.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government regard the passing of the Irish Land Bill, introduced in "another place," as vital to their existence, or do they so regard the passing of a Purchase Bill?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to the hon. and learned Member, I have to say that the Government regard the passing of the Irish Land Bill as of vital importance, and they will use every effort belonging to them as a Government to secure that the Bill shall pass into law.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question. He has stated with regard to the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill that its passing was "of vital matter for the Government," and I ask him whether that is the case also with regard to the Irish Land Bill?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can add nothing, Sir, to the answer I have given.

QUESTIONS — ALTERATION OR OMISSION FROM NOTICE PAPER.

Dr. J. E. KENNY (Cork, S.): Sir, I find that a Question which I handed to the Clerk on this day week, fixing to-day for putting it, does not appear upon the Paper. The complaint I have to make is that I have received no notice explaining why it has not been put upon the Paper. I wish to know from you, Sir, whether it is not the privilege of a Member to receive notice if a Question is irregular, in order that he may, if possible, correct the irregularity?

Mr. SPEAKER: As a general rule, communications are sent to hon. Members whenever there is any irregularity in their Questions. The reason why the hon. Gentleman's Question was rejected was because it contained matter of argument. I suppose it is owing to the pressure of Business that the omission to send notice to the hon. Member occurred. I regret that it should be so: but as a general rule, as I have said, communications are always sent.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I also gave Notice of a Question yesterday to the Clerk at the Table. The Question was taken by the Clerk; and, at the suggestion of the Clerk, I myself made a correction in it, and I understood that the Question was one which would be placed upon the Paper. I find, however, that it has no place upon the Paper to-day, and I have received no notice on the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Question which the hon. Gentleman proposed to put was fully answered yesterday; and the Clerk, acting upon his own authority and discretion, and entirely with my concurrence, did not put it upon the Paper. I should say that the Question, as it was first submitted, was a most improper one. It contained innuendoes which I stigmatized last night in terms not too strong; and I am surprised to find that the hon. Gentleman should make any complaint as to its not being on the Paper.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: As you have deemed it right, Sir, to reprobate, in very strong terms, the Question of which I gave Notice, I think I have a right to claim your indulgence and that of the House while I explain what the Question really was. The Question, Mr. Speaker, was this. [*Cries of* "No!"] In the first place——

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow the hon. Member to state a Question which I have ruled to be improper. I may say that the part of the Question I objected to, and which I immediately struck out, was that in which the hon. Member desired to ask whether there had been any communication between the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury and myself on the subject of applying the closure to the debate. That was a Question which I thought was a most improper one, and one which the hon. Gentleman was not entitled to ask.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: Will you permit me to say that, in proposing to put that Question, I did so for the purpose of showing that the right hon. Gentleman was presuming to assume your consent to the closure being put; and permit me further, Mr. Speaker, to say that I did it in order to show my sense that you would impartially administer the law committed to your care, and that the right hon. Gentleman was placing an unjust and unworthy stigma upon you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I stated that the Question was fully answered last night. It is not usual to put down a Question which has already received a full reply. In order, however, to satisfy the hon. Gentleman, I may say that the Question was to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he was correctly reported in an evening journal to have declared that he intended to apply the closure to the debate on the Motion for the introduction of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill? Then followed that part of the Question which I considered to be improper and irregular, and which I struck out. To the other part of the Question a full and definite reply was given by the right hon. Gentleman last night.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I am sure, Sir, you will permit me to explain, as you appear to be under the impression that I was about to put on the Paper some Question imputing unworthy motives to you, that I had no such intention whatever. Nothing was further from my thoughts; but really my object was to saddle the right hon. Gentleman with the responsibility of assuming that which he had no right to assume.

RUSSIA—ALLEGED ATTEMPT ON THE CZAR.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he was able to give the House any information as to the alleged attempt to assassinate the Emperor of Russia?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have received no communication whatever on the subject.

PROGRESS OF BUSINESS—THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether his attention had been called to the fact that in "another place" the House of Lords had required three weeks between the first and second reading of the Land Bill—not a very intricate measure—and, whether, under these circumstances, he proposed to allow not a single Parliamentary day of interval between the first and second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I am aware, Sir, that an interval will elapse between the first and second reading of the Land Bill in "another place." I am aware also that the Bill, when it is taken in hand in the other House, will proceed with much greater rapidity than we have any reason to anticipate with regard to measures in this House; and, as I have stated, there is no doubt whatever that the Bill will be down here before we can hope to dispose of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in this House. I may, perhaps, be permitted now to refer to the progress of Public Business in relation to the allusion of the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) last evening on the subject. He appealed to me, as well as the right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley), to allow an interval to elapse between the first reading and the second reading of this Bill; and the right hon. Gentleman founded his appeal on the ground that it was essential the country should have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the details of the measure before the second reading was moved. He (Sir William Harcourt) referred to the fact that he had introduced a Crimes Prevention Bill on the 11th of May, 1882, and that he did not move the second reading until the 18th of May. I wish to remind the right hon. Gentleman that that Bill was introduced when it was only in a state of draft; and when he was asked when it would be printed and circulated, on the night of its introduction, he intimated that he could hardly fix a date. It was actually only circulated on Tuesday, May 16.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I expected it to be distributed on the Saturday.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am now speaking of the actual facts of the case. An interval, therefore, of only two days occurred between the actual circulation of the Bill to Members in London and the second reading. I would also remind him that the first reading was taken in one night. Taking those facts into consideration, the Government propose, if the first reading is taken to-night, to give a longer time than was given in the case of the right hon. Gentleman's Bill, and to propose that the debate on the second reading shall be begun on Tuesday. This will give an interval of three days, instead of the two which were allowed in 1882. It is also proposed that there shall be an interval of a week after the second reading before the House is asked to go into Committee on the Bill. It is necessary that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer should introduce his Budget, and some other necessary Business will be taken; but I trust I shall have satisfied right hon. Gentlemen opposite that the Government are, as far as it is possible for them to do so, anxious to meet any reasonable demands that can be made for time for the consideration of this measure. We feel, however, that it is our imperative duty, as we have stated from time to time, to ask the House to come to a decision on the principle of the measure. It is not necessary for me to repeat what I have said on this question; but we rely on the judgment and the approval of the great majority of this House.

MOTION.

PARLIAMENT—THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE (1882)—RULE 2 (ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE).

THE CROFTERS COMMISSION.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness), rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House, for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, the pressing need of more diligent action by the Crofters Commission, and of protection to Crofters who have made application to the Commission to get fair rents fixed against proceedings in bankruptcy involving their expulsion from their holdings before their applications can be heard.

But, the pleasure of the House not having been signified,

Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen:—

Dr. CLARK said, he regretted very much being compelled to take this course, but the answer he had received from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) rendered it unavoidable. He thought the right hon. Gentleman could not be aware of the present condition of things in Scotland, nor what the recent decision of the Court of Session implied. They were under the impression that the Crofters Act passed last year was a protection to the small number of crofters who were not excluded from it. Unfortunately, a decision had been given by the Court of Session which had made that Act perfectly valueless to a large number of the crofters. An appeal was taken to the Court of Session to determine whether a landlord had a right to sue a crofter for arrears of rent, and to make him bankrupt, and so compel him to void his holding. The ex-Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour), who represented the crofters in that appeal, and who had introduced the Bill into the House, informed the Court of Session that it was the intention of the Government, and of Parliament, to give the crofters this protection; but, unfortunately, the Court of Session had decided that as the Common Law of Scotland was not repealed, the protection which the late Government and the House intended to give to the crofters had not been given, and any crofter might now be sued at Common Law by his landlord, decree might be given, and he might be bankrupt in virtue of that decree, and might be expelled from his holding. The right hon. Gentleman was under the impression that there had been very few rack-rents in Scotland, that there were not much arrears, and that this decision of the Court of Session was not of very much importance. They had tried to get information from the Government as to the number of applications made and decisions given by the Crofters Commission, and now they were told to-night that during the six months the Crofters Commission had been sitting only 60 decisions had been given, and that there were thousands of cases still pending. He would like to call attention to a list of decisions given by the Commission, because they demonstrated that the contention of the late Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), to the effect that the crofters, as a rule, are not rack-rented, had not been borne out by the Commission, but the very reverse was the case. The decisions by the Crofters Commission in the Highlands, so far as they had gone, had proved that the Scottish crofters were even more rack-rented than the Irish cottier farmers. They had four estates in Sutherlandshire before them, on three of which reductions were made. On the estate of Skibo there were four cases. In the first the rent was reduced from £7 10*s.* to £1 12*s.*; the second from £22 15*s.* to £7 10*s.*; the third from £2 10*s.* to £1 1*s.*; and the fourth from £3 to £2 5*s.* On the Rosehall estate two decisions were given, in the first of which the rent was reduced from £6 to £2 10*s.*, and the other from £5 to £1 1*s.* On the Invercarron estate there were four cases. In the first the rent was reduced from £10 to £7; the second from £7 to £3 7*s.*; the third from £5 to £2; and the fourth from £7 to £3 6*s.* He had not quoted specimens, but had quoted all the decisions; and they proved that, as far as the Sutherland crofters were concerned, they were more rack-rented than the Irish tenants, and there had been greater reductions in their case than ever were made by the Irish Sub-Commissioners. The evidence given before the Commission in Skye had proved that the great bulk of the crofters were from four to seven years in arrears of rent, and several of the Skye landlords had got decrees by which they could make them bankrupt. In his own county of Caithness, although he had not been there since the General Election, there had been more and larger meetings held, and stronger language used at them, than ever had been used before. The reason was that these men knew that some of the needy landlords were being compelled to sue their crofters in order to prevent themselves from becoming bankrupt. This was a question of great importance to the House, inasmuch as social order would be seriously imperilled. They could not get any Returns from the Government, although they gave such Returns for Ireland, and all they could depend upon was the public Press. In these circumstances, what did the Government intend to do? If they had in six months decided 60 cases, it would take 20 years to get through the present number of cases, and during that time all these crofters would be made bankrupt pending the hearing of their applications. What did the Government intend to do to carry out the section of the Act by which the three Commissioners could have assistance? The Commissioners were empowered to have the assistance of valuers and surveyors. All they spent last year was £200 on assistance of that kind, and in the new Estimates all they intended to ask for next year was £492. It was perfectly clear, under these circumstances, that the Crofters Act was a farce, and would be entirely useless for all practical purposes unless something was done to hasten the work of the Commission. Instead of having 60 cases in six months, they ought to have 600 cases in a month. He did not complain of the Commissioners; but if he were to complain, it would be to say that they were doing their work too thoroughly—that they were giving an amount of time to each individual case which was not justified. If, instead of these gentlemen deciding every case in every township, they decided one case in each township, and had assessors and valuers to go and value and report as in Ireland, more work could be done, and these unfortunate people could be retained in their holdings. There were thousands of cases pending, and only sixty cases had been decided; and it was absolutely necessary to have the work of the Commission accelerated, or the Act would be practically useless, and social order in the Highlands would be seriously impaired and imperilled.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, that perhaps the House would allow him to answer, as the matter had come under his consideration while he was at the Scottish Office. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) said the Scotch crofters were more rack-rented than the Irish tenants, and he founded that observation on the decisions which had been come to in Sutherland. He would give no opinion on the broad question, but the decisions at which the Commissioners had arrived by no means bore out the opinion which the hon. Member had expressed. The County of Sutherland was almost entirely owned by one individual, and the estates on which there had been reductions of rent did not belong to that individual. On the Duke of Sutherland's estates, so far as decisions had been come to, and in so far as it was possible to adduce from conclusions as to rents, he should say that they were too low rather than too high. The hon. Gentleman had told them that rents had been raised because of additional pasture given to the tenants. Even if that were so, it would prove that the relations between landlords and tenants were working smoothly; but, as a matter of fact, the allegation of the hon. Member was not entirely correct, and rents had been raised in cases in which no additional pastures had been given by the proprietors to the crofters. The hon. Member had gone on to say that the Commission were doing their work very slowly, and that at the present rate of progress the Commission might take 20 years to finish its work. That was entirely contrary to the information he had received on the subject from the Commission. Shortly before leaving the Scottish Office they had informed him that at the beginning, as they had to inform themselves on a large number of questions, and while they were in that process of education, as he might call it, they would not work with very great rapidity; but he had understood from them that the urgent cases would be disposed of with greatly augmented speed. Then the hon. Gentleman had come to the question which he had been pleased to describe to the House as one of urgent public importance, and the point he raised was not, perhaps, familiar to most hon. Members of the House. The point he raised was this. He said—

"By your Crofters Act you gave the crofters power to appeal to the Commission to have a fair rent fixed; but during the delay which may in all cases, and must in some, elapse between the application of the crofter to the Commission and the final decision of the Commission, it was possible for the landlord to make the crofter bankrupt, and thus deprive him of the provisions and benefits of the Act."

He (Mr. A. J. Balfour) believed the statement of the law was not inaccurate, and the question was one which had received very anxious attention from the Government all through the winter and spring; and while he was Secretary for Scotland he had under his consideration whether it was necessary or not to bring in a Bill to fill up the gap left in the Crofters Act of last year. The reason he had not done so was, that in not a single instance had a landlord, by making his tenant bankrupt, deprived him of the benefits of the Act. It would have been possible, as the hon. Member was aware, for the landlords to proceed against any number of their tenants. He did not believe there was anything in the Highlands that could be described as anything like rack-renting. He had the most ample proof that the landlords had behaved with the most generous consideration to their tenants, where, nevertheless, rents were in arrear for one, two, three, four, and five years. Those were cases where hardship might possibly be supposed to occur under the existing law; but not a single case had occurred in which a landlord had attempted to deprive a tenant of the advantages and benefits of the Crofters Act. He thought that this disposed of the case as being one of urgent public importance. The hon. Member could not produce a single case of a tenant being turned out on these terms.

Dr. CLARK said, that proceedings were going on now. There had not been time yet.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he could only speak from information three or four weeks old; but up to that time there had not been a single case, nor was there any apprehension of any such case occurring. The defect in the Crofters Act was a purely theoretical and speculative one; and the question for the Government was whether they should deal with it now, or should not rather go on with the legislation at present before that House and the other House of Parliament? They had before the other House at this moment a Land Bill which—whether it was good or bad—was of very large scope, and which was intended and conceived to prevent Irish tenants over the whole of Ireland from suffering eviction through their not being able to pay rents in consequence of no fault of their own. Were they, in those circumstances, to block the way of all legislation before this and the other House in order to bring in a Bill to re-open a very large question connected with an Act in which no real defect had yet been shown to exist, and for which no practical necessity of any kind whatever had been proved? He ventured to suggest to the House that they should best be pursuing their duties if they remedied the law where it was proved to be actually defective in its working, and if they left to a later period the remedy of those purely theoretical and speculative defects which the eyes of the hon. Gentleman had found in the Crofters Act of last year.

Dr. R. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty) said, that they knew the Duke of Sutherland had granted to his tenants about 4,000 acres of land, while the rents had only been raised from £209 to £248. Did the right hon. Gentleman mean to say, under these circumstances, there had been no reduction of rent on the Duke of Sutherland's estates when these 4,000 acres of grazing ground had been granted with an increase of only £40? He did not think any Representative of the Highlands had complained much in that House of the rack-rents. What they had complained of was that the people had not enough of land. He would read to the House some of the reductions made by the Crofter Commission, and he would leave it to the House to say whether the Crofter Representatives, as being considered pestilent agitators, had not been particularly modest and within the line in their demands? In Sutherland the rents on one estate had been reduced 37½ per cent, and the other day the Crofters Commission, which was improving the older it grew, like the Irish Land Commission, made reductions of 65⅓ per cent. On other estates the rents had been reduced 25 per cent, 29½ per cent, 40 per cent, 50 per cent, 47½ per cent, and 67¾ per cent. He appealed to the House and to anybody who chose to look at the figures if the Highland crofters had not been rack-rented, and grievously so? What they wanted the Government to do was to say that it should not be in the power of the landlords to take all the arrears for these fearful rack-rents, and to put the tenants out of their holdings by making them bankrupt. The right hon. Gentleman said no landlords had done this, and were not going to do anything now; but at present the landlords had got writs for £3,000 for arrears of rack-rents hanging over the heads of the people, and they could not take the word of the landlords that they would not put these writs into force, for they knew what the landlords had been in the past. They had no guarantee that the landlords would not repeat their actions in the future; and they wanted to deprive them of the power of putting these writs into execution. Nobody on the Treasury Bench could prevent their doing so; and when it occurred it would be too late to cry out, and the right hon. Gentleman would tell them there was no time for a new Bill; that matters must go on, and the law must take its course; that the men must be made bankrupt, and that families must be thrown on the hill-side and road-side. With reference to the decisions come to by the Commission, he might say that his hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) was so far wrong in counting up the cases that the decisions already given numbered close on 200. As to their blocking Irish legislation, he did not wish to prevent the House going to work upon what seemed to be thought more important Business; but when they were told about blocking Irish legislation, he must remind them that nearly the whole of the Irish Representatives, who must be interested in beneficial legislation, supported the Motion of his hon. Friend. He thought they had shown the Government that there was a very serious case, and if the Government would only give them an assurance that they would afford facilities for dealing with the question, they would not delay or trouble the House any longer.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I should like to say one or two words upon this question, because it was my duty to make some representations to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) on the subject when he was Secretary for Scotland. I confess I regret that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has felt it to be his duty to introduce the matter at this time, and in this particular way. Although I am quite sure that he has no such intention, it may give rise to the inference that he had in view less the urgency of this particular matter than considerations affecting another subject before the House. But my hon. Friend, I think, by common consent, will be admitted to have laid before the House a blot in the Crofters Act. That blot is admitted from this side of the House by those who were responsible for the introduction of the Bill, and who allow that, by inadvertence, it has become possible for grievances which the Act was intended to remedy still to exist. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has also admitted the existence of this blot. It was intended by the promoters of this Crofter Act that, in all cases of arrear, the Court should have discretion. It is possible, in consequence of the inadvertence to which I have referred, that a crofter may be evicted from his holding for arrears of rent without the intervention of any Court. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary says very truly that up to the present time the landlords have not taken advantage of this blot in the Act in order to evict tenants, but it is true that they have it in their power to do so. They may do so, and cases of great hardship may be done before the House has time to interfere. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is perfectly reasonable when he says that the Government cannot be expected to interrupt very important Irish Business before the House in order to give attention to a subject which may in itself involve considerable discussion. I venture to make a suggestion by which I think the difficulty may be avoided. The blot which the hon. Member seeks to remove can be entirely done away with by a very short Act. An Act of one clause would be sufficient to correct the mistake. If my hon. Friends intend, as I imagine they would, to accept this correction, which is admitted on both sides to be necessary and just, without discussion, it would be perfectly possible for the Government to introduce this Bill at once, and carry it into law in a very short time indeed—even at a time when the

Irish Business is before the House. I venture to make this suggestion to prevent what may be a great wrong.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As the right hon. Gentleman has appealed to me, I may say I will very carefully consider the suggestion he has made; but, at the same time, I think the grievance of which he complains is daily diminishing. I will consider the matter very carefully.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) said, he would suggest that the possible Bill might be introduced in "another place," where there was more leisure.

Question put, and *negatived.*

ORDER OF THE DAY.

——o——

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

MOTION FOR LEAVE. FIRST READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FIFTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [28th March],

> "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the prevention and punishment of Crime in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. PARNELL (Cork), in rising to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice, said: I am glad, Sir, we are now in a position for the first time to debate the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) with some sort of an approach to completeness of information. It was not until last night that this House and the country were put in possession of the general and complete policy of the Government in its nakedness and its dishonesty. The proceedings last night, Sir, in "another place," revealed to us the extent of the plot and the gravity of the conspiracy by which it is intended by the Tory Party and the Liberal Unionists on the one side to coerce, if possible, the tenants of Ireland into the payment of impossible rents, and on the other side to compel the purchase of the landlords' interest at exorbitant prices, at prices which, if this House puts it into the power of the Government to coerce the Irish people under this Bill, will most certainly lead to a repudiation on a wholesale scale and to great loss to the British taxpayer. Sir, up to the present we have only had the coercion side, the direct coercion side, of the Government; but last night we were treated in "another place" to what I may call the indirect coercion side of the Government, a species of coercion which, under the pretext of conferring benefits on the Irish people, stabs them in the back, a species of coercion which, under the guise of friendship, inflicts a most deadly injury. Now, Sir, when last Session I asked the Government and this House to intervene in the crisis which I saw very well was approaching in Irish affairs, when I begged and implored of them, this newly-elected Parliament, full of fresh Members, who could not complain of the fatigue of a recent Session as a reason for a speedy holiday—when I entreated this House to postpone its holiday for a while in order to bring about some *modus vivendi* to enable the Irish tenants to pass through the coming winter, I was met with the statement that the Government had appointed a Select Commission to inquire into the Land Question, and that when they received its Report they would act on it. I predicted, Sir, that if you waited for the winter you would find things very much entangled, and so far gone before you met again that you would be called upon by the Ministry not to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission in the direction of land reform, but to pass a Coercion Bill of unexampled stringency and most drastic provisions, and, unhappily, I have not proved to be a false prophet. I wish it had been otherwise, and the Government in this House are pressing on their coercion with almost indecent haste. On the other hand, they have refused to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission. It is impossible for us to consider this question of the state of Ireland without inquiry into the sufficiency of the projects of the Government with regard to remedial legislation. I say that these projects, as announced to us last night, stand condemned by the Report of their own Commission for their insufficiency to meet the justice of the situation and the gravity of the tenants' case. What did the Land Commission recommend? They made three main or principal recommendations. The first of all was that the judicial term should be shortened from 15 to five years; they recommended, in the second place, that leaseholders should be admitted to the benfits of the Land Act, and the third recommendation was that the holders of town parks should be constituted present tenants, and should on application be admitted to have a fair rent fixed. With the exception of the admission of the leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act, the Government have absolutely thrown overboard the other two recommendations of the Commission—that is to say, that out of the three main or principal recommendations the Government have only adopted one. They have declined to shorten the judicial term of tenancy from 15 years to five; they have declined to admit the occupiers of the town parks to the benefit of the Land Act of 1881, and have contented themselves with a mere modification of the definition which will go a very small distance in the required direction. But the two recommendations of the Royal Commission are quite as important for their negative side as for their positive side. We have heard a great deal of the land proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain); how he has bent his great talent and knowledge of Ireland to the construction of a Land Purchase Bill. I am not at all sure that within the last 12 months the right hon. Gentleman has not constructed several Land Purchase Bills, each successive one different to the previous one. Sir, we are told now that he has constructed a Land Purchase Bill, and he has sold this Land Purchase Bill to the Government, the conditions being that the Government have purchased this Land Purchase Bill from him in exchange for his vote. In other words, it is not a case of two fools meeting. Her Majesty's Government have been the wiser of the two, because they have given no value whatever—the two important considerations made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham being that the Government should accept his Land Purchase Bill, and he is to vote in favour of the Coercion Bill. The right hon. Gentleman is wedded to his idea of the substitution of small Local Authorities for the Central Authority contemplated by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and we may assume—although we have not been favoured with any details as to the Purchase Bill of the Government—we may assume that the Land Purchase Bill of the Government will be in the direction of that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—at all events, they will be very ungrateful to him if it be not so. But what does the Royal Commission say with regard to this point? They say in paragraph 26 of their Report—

> "We have found an all but unanimous opinion against the expectation that any satisfactory result would follow from the introduction of Local Authorities as guarantors in ordinary or congested districts, and the evidence shows that these authorities would decline such responsibility."

Further on they say in another paragraph—

> "We think that much caution should be exercised with dealing with small tenants as purchasers of their holdings."

So that the Royal Commission expressly warned the Government against fathering the Bill of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. They point out that it would be dangerous, so far as it was operative, and that in all probability it would only be operative to a very small extent. Well, then, Sir, dual ownership is to be abolished in the permanent Bill of the Government—the second Bill of the Government—and it is to be abolished, I suppose, by the guarantee of these Local Authorities in Ireland which has been condemned by the Royal Commission, so that we find not only do the Government refuse to carry out the positive recommendations of the Royal Commission, but they also absolutely disregarded its warnings in these two matters which they advise them not to do. But, Sir, I would turn for a moment to the proposal for dealing with the present exigencies of the case—the situation in Ireland. I have pointed out that it is not the intention of the Government to adopt the principal recommendation of the Royal Commission, based upon the evidence which they received, that the judicial term of the tenancy should be shortened in length from 15 years to five; and here we find that again the trail of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham appears to stain the ground. The ill-omened word "bankruptcy" is introduced, and the example which is supposed to have been set by the successful workings of the Bankruptcy Bill of the right hon. Gentleman is to be invoked in reference to the case of the distressed Irish tenants —in other words, Bankruptcy Courts are to be set up wholesale right, left, and centre, all over Ireland in order that the Irish tenants may be turned into bankrupts. These Bankruptcy Courts are to be composed of County Court Judges. To them is to be given the duty of deciding the great number of intricate and difficult matters which from the nature of the case it will be entirely impossible for these gentlemen either to have knowledge of, or time to consider or adjudicate upon. These County Court Judges are limited in number, and I admit they have not a great deal of work to do. Thanks to the freedom from litigation of the mercantile and of the prominent classes in Ireland, there is not much for these County Court Judges to do. But what do you propose to do now as part of your remedial legislation? You propose to give to these 25 County Court Judges the duty of deciding whether 450,000 Irish tenants are, in the first instance, persons of good character; whether, in the second place, their inability to pay rent is due to the fact that they have taken too much whiskey, or that the land is too poor to produce the rent; and, in the third place, what the fair rent is to be that they ought to pay in future. A more monstrous proposal never entered into the brain of man.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I rise, Sir, to ask a question. The hon. Gentleman is going into the details of a Bill before another House, and the Question I have to ask is, if he is to discuss that Bill, shall I be allowed to reply to him in equal detail?

Mr. SPEAKER: There is manifestly great inconvenience in discussing the general question of land on an Amendment to a Motion for the introduction of a Bill for the Amendment of the Criminal Law. The Amendment, in my opinion, must bear some relation to the Bill to which it refers. Although, of course, allusion to the Land Question is perfectly in Order; yet any detailed reference to a debate in another House would be improper and un-Parliamentary.

Mr. PARNELL: I shall keep strictly within the limits of your ruling, Sir; but I would remind the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant that in a discussion upon a Motion before a Select Committee of the Whole House for inquiry into the state of Ireland, it is quite impossible to limit the nature of the discussion solely and entirely to the merits of the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to ask the leave of the House to introduce. We are under the necessity of inquiring into other branches of the Irish Constitution in order to see whether the proposals of the Government as a whole are such as to free them from the necessity of agreeing to my Amendment. That is what I seek. Without referring to any Bill which may be before the other House, and without referring to the details or passages in debate which may have taken place in the other House, I may say, generally, a more monstrous proposal—whether it be the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, or whether it be the proposal of Her Majesty's Government—than that which has been described to us—namely, that of these 25 Judges, who have already some business to do, although not a great deal, to confide to them the duty not only of investigating the moral character of all the Irish tenants who are not leaseholders, but also the capacity of their farms to pay a higher or lower rent than that which they pay now, was never heard of. It is a proposal that is bound to break down from the very commencement, and I can only suppose it was put forward because the Government thought it was necessary for them to propose something in an ameliorative direction, because they had proposed this coercive measure. It is the old story—it shows that in proportion to the severity of your Coercion Code the efficiency of your remedial measures will be diminished. In proportion as you strike down Irish liberties, so will be the ratio of the lessened efficiency of the ameliorating Courts, such as the Courts of the Land Commissioners and others you may establish in Ireland for the redress of Irish grievances. As one of those who carefully watched the working of the Land Act of 1881, and who took some part in the agitation of the Land League in those days, I desire to give it as my solemn conviction that, had it not been for the passage of the Coercion Act of 1881, the Land Act of that year would have been received in a very different and far better spirit by the Irish people, and the operations of the Courts would not have been hampered by the criticism of the House of Lords and the opprobrium of the landlord faction in Ireland, which intimidated these Courts, and prevented them from doing that justice to the Irish tenants which they were established to do. Nay, more, Sir; I will go further than that, and I will say I am convinced that the landlord party in the House of Commons had not previously got the Coercion Act of 1881 passed, they would have allowed a far better and more generous Land Act to have passed through both this House and the House of Lords, and that Act would not have been foredoomed to failure by reason of its own inefficiency from the very moment of its birth. If you handicap the Irish tenants in their struggle against unjust rents, if you throw the power into the landlords' hands in Ireland, depend upon it your imperfect attempts to do justice to the tenants will be foredoomed to failure, and that it will be impossible for them to contend against the obstacles which will be placed in their way. Sir, I do not propose to deal fully with the question of the Land Bill which was introduced last night in "another place;" but I will just say this—the last General Election turned to a large extent upon the question of the land proposals of the late Government, proposals to purchase out the tenant at the expense and at the risk of the State in the interests of the landlords, and did more than anything else to defeat and wreck the late Ministry. If there was one thing the electorate of Great Britain was against it was the loan of the credit of the State for the purpose of assisting the Irish landlords; and I am perfectly convinced from the development I have seen on the one hand of coercion, and on the other hand the land legislation in "another place," that the very danger that the English and British electorate sought to avoid by rushing away from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and his plans, they have leapt into by placing the present Government into Office; and if they allow this Coercion Act to pass, the last defence against the wholesale robbery of the British taxpayer will be removed—there will be then nothing to prevent the exercise of landlord intimidation against the tenants in Ireland. They will be compelled in self-defence—and we have seen many instances of it already — to buy their farms upon any terms that the landlords may force upon them. The result of that—the inevitable result—must be loss to the British taxpayer, because agriculture is at such a low ebb in Ireland now, as in England, that the possibility of obtaining the rent out of the land has almost ceased to exist, except in the very best classes of land. If you attempt to float the landlords by means of State credit, the result must surely be a wholesale repudiation of their obligations, when this coercion shall have been removed, by the tenants whom the landlords will have compelled to purchase at extravagant terms. I have myself always desired to act honestly in respect of this question of land purchase. I have always been identified with it ever since I took a prominent part in Irish politics. I think that the solution of the Irish Land Question depends upon the purchase of their holdings by the tenants. I was denounced as a robber in 1879 by the then Prime Minister, who ridiculed the idea of any large scheme for enabling the Irish tenants to purchase their holdings. The late Sir Stafford Northcote pointed out the danger there would be to the British taxpayer taking the place of these impoverished landlords. In 1880 we (the Irish Party) were held up to public odium because we asked, not that there might be a forced sale of all Irish lands to the Irish tenants, but that a Royal Commission might have power to buy such estates in Ireland as they considered necessary, where strained relations might exist between landlords and tenants. But from first to last I have never wavered or faltered for a single moment in the belief that in the direction of land purchase lies your hope of settling the Irish Land Question. I did not go, I could not go, with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, in hoping or believing that his

Land Act would prove a final solution or settlement of the difficulty, although if it had been allowed to work by the House of Lords and the landlord faction in Ireland it would have gone very much nearer a solution than it hitherto has done. That has been our position—to make the Irish tenant the owner of his holding, and we believe he will turn the sands into gold. We believe that if this be done on a fair basis and a fair price, in the absence of coercion — not with coercion—that the Irish tenant will fulfil his obligations to the last penny; for he would feel as one who drags a lessening instead of a lengthening chain behind him; and the result will be satisfactory to the English nation and without any risk to the Imperial Exchequer. But in the present proposals of the Government there is wanting every element of future security and satisfaction, so that what you give on the one hand you take away with the other; and these unfortunate tenants and those who speak for them will subject themselves to the most terrible penalties if they venture to say a word against the Ministerial view, or the view of the landlords of Ireland. We shall be told during the debate that the Government do not intend to do this, and that they will not use the Coercion Act in such a manner; that they do not intend to use it in this fashion or in that fashion; but we know how these professions vanish when the Government get the sharp sword into their hands. I recollect it being said that Mr. Forster's Coercion Act of 1881 was not to be used except against those who directly incited to outrage and intimidation; that it would be used only against village ruffians, and not used against people who gave advice to tenants. Well, Sir, I can give hundreds of instances of persons arrested under that Act who did nothing whatever but go to the landlord and ask for a reduction of rent. I remember the case of a most respectable farmer from the County of Wexford who was brought into Kilmainham one day. He was a Mr. Crosby, I think, a tenant on an estate in that county, and he had a large establishment in addition to the farm. He was a leaseholder, one of the class you are now going to relieve after seven years' waiting; and he headed a deputation of his brother tenants to the landlord or to the agent—I cannot say now which—to ask for a reduction for rent. The landlord or agent said to him—"I will go up to Dublin Castle to-night, and I will see Mr. Forster." He did not speak so courteously of Mr. Forster. He used another name, which, in respect for the memory of the man, I shall not myself use. "I shall see Mr. Forster," he said. "I will have you in gaol in Kilmainham before 24 hours have gone by." Well, Sir, he did go up to Dublin Castle, and saw Mr. Forster, and Mr. Crosby was in gaol in Kilmainham before 24 hours. It will be the same way now. Even the printer's devils employed in the office of *United Ireland* were arrested under the Act of 1881 for intimidation because they inked the types of that journal, and the very newsboys of the streets were arrested by the police for intimidation for crying the paper about the streets. So it will be now. You will coerce the Irish tenants, and compel them to use your so-called remedial legislation—legislation which can only be carried out at a vast cost to the English taxpayer. All guarantees of fair dealing will be gone; and how can you expect that the Irish tenants will not repudiate such a bargain when they get the chance. I will now, Sir, leave this question of remedial legislation, and I will go to the Coercion Bill of the Government, and the case which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant made upon its introduction. And, Sir, I have to complain that in the course which the Government have taken they have entirely deprived the House of any real means of checking the information they have supplied. They supplied the House with information solely on their own authority. They have not given us the names, or, except in a very few cases, any details that would enable us to check the *bonâ fide* character of this information. Now, it is a very serious thing, when you are attempting to steal away the liberties of a nation by such a case as that put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, to depart from the precedent that has been set by the previous Government under similar circumstances. At all other times we have had figures in abundance; we have had statistics of crime that the Government in question had based their cases upon those figures and upon those statistics; but in this case the Government have not based their case on any figures or on any statistics given to the House. The right hon. Gentleman treated us to a series of anecdotes, but he gave us nothing definite. I remember in my young days the great pleasure I experienced when reading *Robinson Crusoe.* I asked whether it was true or not. I was informed that it was not absolutely true, but I was comforted by the assurance that it was founded upon fact. But we are unable to comfort ourselves even with this assurance in the case of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. The child's guide to knowledge is nothing to the encyclopedia the right hon. Gentleman has unfolded for the edification of us Irish. He has told us that he has based his case upon a series of anecdotes. For example, he gave us the number of persons under police protection in Ireland. That is an important piece of collateral evidence. I submit, it is not one of the figures which should have been given as one of the leading grounds for the Government case, because it is a statement which is impossible for us to test or compare with those of previous years. Such figures as those are not given in the annual Government Returns. The number of persons under police protection in the year 1885, for instance, when the Conservative Government came into Office, abandoning coercion, it would be extremely interesting for us to know, in order that we might compare them with the figures given for the year 1886. We have not got this information, nor can we get information of any kind, relied on by the right hon. Gentleman in the Parliamentary Papers. We are, therefore, without the usual means of testing either the truth or the value of the truth of those statements of the right hon. Gentleman, which he has used as one of his leading crutches. The right hon. Gentleman gave us the charges of some of the Irish Judges. I say some, for he only gave us four of the charges of the Irish Judges. The charges of Irish Judges are not put into Parliamentary Blue Books, and, consequently, we are here, again, not in a position to compare the charges of those four Irish Judges with the charges delivered in 1885; and, probably, if we were in a position to make the comparison we would have found that Mr. Justice Lawson, Mr. Justice Johnson, Mr. Justice Murphy, and Mr. Justice O'Brien have been delivering exactly the same kind of charges they had used during the last eight of the nine years since 1879. The right hon. Gentleman said these were not political Judges—two of them certainly are—Judge O'Brien and Judge Johnson are political Judges—I mean they are Judges who owe their elevation to the Bench in a great measure to the fact that one was successful in obtaining a seat in the House of Commons, and that the other was not successful; for I had the pleasure of defeating Mr. Justice O'Brien myself at a contested election in Ennis in 1878. So, consequently, both these Judges are political Judges. They are notorious for the violence of their utterances, and for the way in which they transgress all traditions of the Judicial Bench in going out of their way in denouncing what they called the inherent vice and iniquity of the Irish people. Nobody but right hon. Gentlemen like the Chief Secretary could have attached the slighest importance to their utterances, and nobody else would have thought of bringing them forward as a fair example of their class. But although we cannot go back and compare the utterances of these Judges with their utterances in past years, and especially in 1885, when, as I have already said, the Conservative Government abandoned coercion, I am entitled to ask, why did not the Government give us some of the charges of the other Irish Judges? There are 21 Irish Judges, and out of these the Government selected the four I have mentioned. Why did not they give us the charges of some of the other 17 Judges? I have been at some pains to collect some of those charges during the recent Assizes, but I really do not like to detain the House in reading them. For the four that the right hon. Gentleman has trotted out, I shall be able to trot out 10 or 12 in a distinctly reverse sense to that of those four Judges. But I do not like to detain the House by going over these charges. I will say this—that I think the Government have placed us in a most unfair position by going out of the beaten track in reference to this matter by basing their case on a few Judges' charges on the failures of juries to convict picked up here and there all over the country, the foul refuse of scavengering, which the right hon. Gentleman should have been ashamed to produce. I have here the Judges' charges for Mayo, Meath, Galway, Tipperary, the City of Limerick, the County of Sligo, North Tipperary, Waterford County, King's County, Tipperary County, Roscommon County, and Westmeath County. I will read you one example which will show that the Judges have spoken in the highest terms of the peace of the country, of the absence of any serious crime, and also of the considerable diminution in crime that has taken place since the last Assizes. Let us take the North Riding of Tipperary as a fair example. Baron Dowse said—

> "The cases reported to me by the county inspector number only eight, and with the exception of those I have mentioned they do not show the prevalence of crime in this part of the county. The contrast between these eight and the 41 tried before the Judge of this Assize last year is, on the whole, very satisfactory. So far as it goes it shows the crimes are very few. Tipperary was never in a better state."

Baron Dowse then goes on to administer a little lecture to the Grand Jury. He says—

> "You may possibly like, before you are discharged, to pass, like other Grand Juries, a resolution about the desperate state of the country. I have nothing to do with that, and you may think that what I have said is all wrong. What I have to deal with is cases of crime. These are what the county inspector has to deal with; and, so far as the cases of crime are concerned, the state of the country is satisfactory. I state there has been a decrease of crime in all classes."

I can read similar extracts from the other Judges. For instance, Lord Justice Fitzgibbon, in Meath, said—

> "The county showed its usual absence of anything like serious crime, and that was the subject which Judges of Assize had directly to deal with."

Baron Dowse, in Waterford County, said—

> "He was glad to inform the Grand Jury that on that occasion, as on many previous occasions, he could congratulate them on the peaceful state of the county."

In Waterford City, Judge Andrews said—

> "There are only two cases to go before you, and these are of the ordinary character."

In the Queen's County, Judge Johnson said the County Inspector's Report showed that the county was in a satisfactory condition. In Sligo, Judge Johnson, and in Roscommon, Judge Murphy, congratulated the Grand Juries on the peaceableness of those two counties. In Westmeath, Sir Michael Morris, the Chief Justice, said—

> "I am happy to inform you there is only one bill to go before you."

The Grand Jury then retired, and found "no bill." I do not think it is necessary to go any further, though I have five or six other cases. I have selected charges from different parts of the country, and other charges of the Judges tell the same tale; and I ask, Sir, was it fair for the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to treat us exclusively to the charges of four Judges, and ignore the charges of Judges who charged in totally different directions, and in so very different a tone. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary also relied upon the number of offences committed in five large counties in Ireland—comprising, as he said, one-third of Ireland—which is only true as to area, the population being about one-sixth or one-seventh. He had selected them as being the worst in Ireland, and he said there had been 755 offences of all kinds committed last year. Recollect, not agrarian offences, against which this Bill is directed, but offences of all kinds. Is that an extravagant calendar of crime for the large counties of Ireland, comprising one-third of the area and one-seventh of the population of the country, for the whole year? Just look at the calendar of crime in any of your own English counties during the period of one year. Well, he says that out of these 755 cases there was no clue discovered of the perpetrators in 546; but who is responsible for that? The explanation is that in Ireland we have no detective police force, or police worthy of the name. The police force is kept up as a military force for the purpose of overawing opposition at evictions of Irish tenants, and it is notorious that no attempt worthy of the name is made to detect crime unless it is agrarian. I will venture to say, also, that if you compare the statistics of crime in England, where no clue is obtained and no person is made amenable, you will find a large proportion of such cases also; and yet you have an efficient police force, and the sympathy of the people with them, not alienated to a great extent, as in Ireland, by the fact that so-called law and justice has been used for centuries for the oppression of the people. I believe it would be no exaggeration to say that of the offences committed in English towns there are fewer than half in which the offender is caught, or any person made amenable to the law. We all know the numbers of murdered people who are yearly picked up in the Thames, of whose deaths no trace can be found. I say it is monstrous to take away the character of the people of Ireland on such grounds as those. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary says there are 322 instances in which persons injured declined to swear any information. I should like to have compared with this the number of people who refused to swear informations in regard to cases in England in 1885. It is undoubtedly the case that a great many of these injuries occur in party faction. In these faction fights it seems to be a point of honour with the person concerned not to give information to the police. It consequently happens that persons who have got a blow on the head with a stick in a faction fight, or who has received some other injury in some drinking row coming home from a fair, do frequently not volunteer to give information. I regret that this should be so. I regret that there should be any faction fights. I regard them as a disgrace and a weakness to Ireland; but they are not nearly so numerous as they were, and this Bill is not directed against faction fights. The number of cases in which juries have refused to convict has been also made much of. The right hon. Gentleman has given us three or four instances in regard to this matter; but it is a curious fact that he did not give one in any of the five counties which he held up to us as examples of all that is terrible in the state of Ireland. Three or four cases in which juries refused to agree were given, and two of them were in the County of Tipperary—a model county, according to the testimony of Baron Dowse. The Government are so happy as to possess a careful informant in Tipperary in the person of the notorious Mr. George Bolton, who is the Crown Solicitor there; and I have no doubt he is the person who has given the right hon. Gentleman the information which he conveyed to the House as to these cases the other night. What were these two cases? One of them was that of a man named Clarke, whom the right hon. Gentleman wished the House to believe was acquitted of some charge, because he was either a National Leaguer or a local leader of the people, whatever that may be. According to the best of my information, Clarke was not a member of the National League at all; but whether he was one does not alter the details of my case, which shows that, so far from there being any demoralization of the jury, expressly proves that Clarke, who was a Protestant, managed to get upon the jury a friend of his named Hayes, a publican and a Catholic. This man Hayes was the only member of the jury, consisting of 12, who refused to agree on a verdict of guilty against Clarke. Now, that is one example of the cases on which the right hon. Gentleman seeks to blacken the character of juries not only of Tipperary, but of all Ireland. Eleven Catholics were for a conviction, and one Catholic, a personal friend of Clarke's, was for an acquittal. It is very hard that we should be driven and obliged to investigate these cases in remote holes and corners of Ireland, and occupy the time of the House of Commons afterwards in contradicting such ridiculous statements by producing such information as we can get.

Colonel KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet): How does the hon. Gentleman get these names of the proportion of the jurors?

Mr. PARNELL: The hon. and gallant Gentleman and his Friends are always very unwilling to give us any information; but if the hon. and gallant Gentleman appeals to his friend Mr. George Bolton, he would be able to tell him that my information is absolutely correct. At any rate, I am in a position to guarantee the authenticity and certainty of my information, and I will substantiate it before a Select Committee of the House of Commons if the House will grant one. Now I come to the case of a man named Hogan, who is acquitted on a charge of rape. The right hon. Gentleman says he was charged with a horrible outrage on a respectable girl, and was found not guilty because he was a well-known Leaguer in the district. Now, I have here a letter—this letter I am going to read is from a barrister who was present in the Court watching the trial—

"The fact was the prisoner was charged with rape, and the prosecutrix was an able-bodied, healthy young woman, aged about 21 or 22,

> She swore that he raped her six separate times in one hour—a very remarkable story. The jury ought not, and would not, have convicted on the Crown case alone. But the prisoner was examined under Mr. Stead's Act. It was proved, and not uncontradicted, that he spent five hours about the fields and ditches with this girl that evening, and he repeatedly had connection with her, but with her entire consent. The jury thereupon acquitted him."

This is one of the cases of the right hon. Gentleman. On such information given by his friend Mr. George Bolton, the right hon. Gentleman regales the House of Commons, while the Government is engaged in destroying the liberties of the people. This man Hogan was not a member of the National League. Now I turn to the third case; and this was a case of a rich farmer who was charged, according to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, with obtaining money by means of false documents. The case, said the right hon. Gentleman, of the prosecutor, a maltster, was proved in the clearest possible manner. The Judge charged strongly for a conviction; but the jury, which consisted of farmers, disagreed. Now, the barrister whose letter I have previously quoted says of this case—

> "This was a case which was proved, in which perhaps a very intelligent jury, familiar with accounts, would have convicted. But, as a matter of fact, it was a most complicated and difficult case. The transactions, nearly all of them, took place in 1885; the witnesses examined were by no means clear; but, on the contrary, were indistinct, mainly owing to failure of memory, but partly to the complex nature of the case. The documentary evidence included a great number of cheques, and the accuracy of various complicated book entries. The wonder was not that the jury disagreed, but that, as the fact was, 10 were for a conviction, at which the counsel for the prosecution was very much surprised."

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour)(Manchester, E.): Is that the same case of which the hon. Gentleman spoke just now?

Mr. PARNELL: That is the same case. The right hon. Gentleman observes that there is nothing contradictory in the two accounts, but a great deal which is confirmatory. I will now leave the right hon. Gentleman and his selected cases, which he gave to the House in regard to jury-packing. He gave three or four cases altogether in which he gave the names. I have traced three of them, with the results I have stated. Now, Sir, he relied also on the Boycotting cases. He told us of a large number of cases of Boycotting in Ireland, amounting to 836. Here, again, no information is given in the Parliamentary Return, and the same complaint that I made in regard to other branches of the right hon. Gentleman's case applies to these statistics also. We have no opportunity of comparing the number of such cases with the number in previous years, especially in 1885. The House will see that it would have been of the utmost importance to us to have been enabled to compare the number of Boycotting cases in 1886—when the Government comes forward with this, the most drastic Coercion Act that has ever been heard of since 1833, and that Act was not used—and the number of Boycotting cases in 1885, when, by the mouth of their Chief Secretary and of Lord Carnarvon, the Government announced they were going to abandon the old evil methods of coercion. I do not believe, if we had the information which we ought to have, and which it was the duty of the right hon. Gentleman to produce, we should find there was very much difference in the number of persons Boycotted in 1885 and the number Boycotted in 1886. But the right hon. Gentleman gives us some cases of Boycotting, and I must assume, as in the case of jury-packing, the right hon. Gentleman has selected the most favourable examples from his point of view he could find. He gave us the case of a butcher who was prosecuted and punished for intimidation, the person intimidated being subsequently Boycotted and his wife refused the services of a midwife. It is very terrible that this poor woman should have been refused help in the hour of her need, and I do not believe that any number of persons in Ireland, even in that district, would have done such a thing, or have taken any part in doing it. But what does it prove? The person who was charged with the Boycotting offence was convicted. Therefore, that is not a failure of the law. This is an example given in support of a Bill brought forward to prevent failures in the law with regard to cases of Boycotting. But the right hon. Gentleman places in the very forefront of his examples the case of a person who was convicted, with the result of showing that the accused person was convicted in spite of the fact that he had the sympathy of the people of the locality enlisted on his side. Then the Thurles case in August, 1885, was another of the right hon. Gentleman's examples, just at the very time when Lord Carnarvon was going up and down Ireland preaching peace and conciliation to the Irish people; and when Lord Salisbury was making his celebrated Newport speech about the uselessness of the intimidation clauses of the Crimes Act. Then he gives us a third example, a resolution adopted at a meeting of a National League branch in Sligo—

> "That Mr. J. Harvey be adopted as the Poor Law candidate for this parish, and that Mr. Brett be asked to send in his resignation so as to save expenses."

What are the unseen applications of the new Bill which are to prevent people in localities in Ireland from passing a resolution asking candidates to withdraw from competition for the post of Poor Law Guardian? Could any Constitutional right be more harmless than that of passing such resolutions without a single intimidating or inflammatory speech or word? Then there was another case of intimidation which the right hon. Gentleman has culled. This was a resolution passed by a local branch of the National League on the 25th March last year, in which members were informed that they were expected to pay their subscriptions then due to the branch. Then the right hon. Gentleman gave us a long list of cases of Boycotting, and these cases I would ask the House to notice he divided into classes. He gave us no less than eight or nine distinct classes of Boycotting, and amongst them was the case of a man who—as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland would have them believe—was Boycotted because he refused to join the National League. He was challenged on the spot to give a single case of pressure being brought to bear on anybody to join the National League throughout the whole of Ireland, but he could not do so. If any such thing as this occurred in connection with the National League, that branch guilty of conduct like that would be dissolved on the spot, for the simple reason that no pressure of any kind is brought to bear on anyone to induce them to join the National League. The right hon. Gentleman quoted that case and others in support of his argument; but he did not give us a single instance actually of that class of offence. He then made the further accusation against the National League, that it had destroyed the value of the tenant-right in Irish land. I always thought that the value of the tenant-right in Irish land after the tenant had paid his rent and provided for the wants of himself and his family had been entirely destroyed by the fall in prices produced by American competition. If the Irish farmer has a margin on the wrong side of his balance, he can have no tenant-right; it ceases to exist, and it does not require the all-potent and mischievous body the National League, or anything else, to step in and destroy it. I now come, Mr. Speaker, to the provisions of the Bill itself. I will not go into the figures which were given with so much power and force, and which I cannot pretend to imitate, even at a modest distance, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and which proved that the state of Ireland in regard to crime, as compared with its state in previous years, is one of enormous improvement, and that whereas, in the case of preceding Coercion Acts, a case was made out, showing that crime was on the ascendant, in the present instance the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian shows that crime was going down; nor shall I refer to the contention of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England (Sir Richard Webster) last night. We were taunted by the hon. and learned Gentleman with the fact that when a Coercion Bill was brought into this House in 1869 there was not as much agrarian crime in Ireland as at the present time. If the hon. and learned Gentleman had the knowledge on the subject which we cannot expect he should have of the Irish Question, he would have known that the Coercion Bill of 1869-70, as compared with the present Bill of Her Majesty's Government, was as new milk. It consisted only of two or three very insignificant provisions, one of which is now embodied in the law of the land—namely, the provision in regard to searching for arms and punishing the possession of arms. Now, let me say a few words with regard to the provisions of the Bill which is to be laid before us by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. We have, first of all, clauses taken, as the right hon. Gentleman told us, from the Scotch Act relating to secret inquiry and examination. Now, Sir, these clauses are harmless enough if society is in a normal condition; then they are not liable to be abused. The working of these clauses in the Act of 1882 and subsequent years showed that they were liable to abuse, and that they were not effective, except in a few cases—such as murder. The only instances in which these clauses in their practical working were effective was in the case of the "Invincibles." I do not believe the "Invincible" conspiracy would have been broken by you were it not for the denunciation which Mr. Michael Davitt, my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. J. Dillon), and myself issued on the morning that we heard of the terrible crime in the Phœnix Park. I believe it was that denunciation that shook that conspiracy and made it possible for the officers of the law in Ireland to make their secret inquiries to stamp out the conspiracy, and to convict the prisoners connected with it; and, finally, to break it up. But what was our experience of these secret inquiry clauses in the Act of 1882? Why, that they were used to ascertain the case of the prisoner before he came to trial, so that the Crown lawyers might be informed of all the particulars as well as the prisoner knew them himself. The witnesses for the defence in the case of the "Invincible" trials were actually summoned after the proceedings had commenced; and after it was known that these people were to be witnesses, they were summoned before the secret tribunal in Dublin Castle and examined as to their knowledge of the matter and as to the evidence they were going to give in the trials before the Court. I say, Mr. Speaker, that is striking below the belt; and are methods which should not be adopted even in dealing with murderers before trial. I now go a step farther. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland says trial by jury is to be abolished altogether, and that instead of Judges we are to have two Stipendiary Magistrates, or an English Judge. There is power given to change the venue, and the right hon. Gentleman appears to have given both his English jury and his change of venue, because he said he could not depend on the jury system at all; and, secondly, because it was necessary to remove the trial of certain cases to the Old Bailey. We are, as I have said, to have two Stipendiary Magistrates. What are their powers to be? They are to be entitled to try cases of criminal conspiracy, Boycotting, Whiteboy offences, assaulting the officers of the law, taking forcible possession of premises, and inciting to the above offences. The calendar of offences in the Act of 1882 is enormously increased. Whiteboy offences are not known to your Statute Law; they are offences which are punishable by barbarous punishments which are most drastic in their character, and these offences are to be tried by these men. Then you make a provision for the trial of cases of criminal conspiracy. My hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo would have been tried under that clause, and would have been sent to a plank bed in an Irish prison for six months with hard labour. He would have been given 16 ounces of bread and water a-day, and, perhaps, a little porridge once a-week by way of a change. This is the way you are going to treat your political prisoners, and to bring peace and contentment to Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland says—"We do not propose to interfere with the liberty of the Press." Oh, no, no; not directly. Everything is to be done indirectly in this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "We entertain the hope that by giving magistrates summary jurisdiction, entitling them to punish persons inciting to those offences, we may be able to prevent the Press from being sharers in these crimes."

As I stated a while ago anent the printer's devil, the newsboys, the men who attend to the engine, would not be safe; nay, more, they would be certain to be attacked under this law. Inciting to intimidation was one of these offences provided for in Mr. Forster's Act, and under the special provision the whole staff of *United Ireland* were arrested. It was not merely the journalist who sits in his parlour and writes the article who was attacked, but the unfortunate printer of the paper and the men who are trying to earn their bread by the work of their hands. I leave the question of the change of venue and the change of jury with the remark that, in all the provisions of the Act of 1882 there was none that excited so much distrust in the minds of public men of the impartiality of English justice in Ireland, or lent more power to the belief that, in consequence of the operation of these clauses, prisoners had been sent to the gallows and penal servitude who were really innocent men; and several innocent persons are still suffering long sentences of penal servitude on account of those provisions. The right hon. Gentleman told us he could not trust any jury, not even the Belfast jury that refused to convict an Orangeman who was put upon his trial for murdering a soldier. With regard to the jury system, the powers which the right hon. Gentleman seeks to obtain from this House are powers to enable him to put into the jury box any man that Mr. George Bolton desires—knowing as he will know, or as his underlings will know—because he will not do the dirty work himself—men whose political complexion will be well known beforehand, and who can be trusted. They are the powers to enable the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends to know beforehand what the jury will do; and, Mr. Speaker, if I were in a position to choose—and I hope I may not be called upon to make a selection—I should prefer to such a tribunal the tender mercies of an Old Bailey jury. The Lord Lieutenant has also power to make it an offence against the Act to have anything to do with an association formed for the commission of crime, carrying on operation for, or by the operation of crime, for inciting to commit crime, for promoting and inciting to acts of violence and intimidation, for interfering with the administration of the law, or disturbing the maintenance of law and order. He was certainly a very ingenious lawyer who drew that. It is thoroughly comprehensive, and I defy anyone, politician, or anyone else, to lift a finger or to say a word of which the Government disapprove, if they choose to put him on trial, without standing a pretty good chance of conviction, no matter how innocent the man may be. Sir, I am sorry to believe that in this Bill the reign of judicial murder in Ireland will be commenced. The hopes of a better time which, for a few short weeks, dawned on the minds of the Irish people have disappeared. The suborning of witnesses will begin, and so will the wholesale perjury of your Crown officials in Ireland. What is it you are going to do? You will try the tenants and their advocates by packed juries of their landlords and their creatures. The tenants and their advocates, for the offence of showing that a reduction of rent is necessary, will be hurried before a landlord jury, who will decide in their own cause. These partizan juries will not even exhibit the ordinary tendency of an English jury. They will hasten to convict. Their minds will be irritated by the recollection of their own losses, arising, on the one hand, out of remedial legislation sanctioned by this House, and on the other by the action of General Buller and my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo. They will be burning in the loss to their pockets and the loss to their *prestige*. It is hopeless to expect a fair trial from such men and by such a system. It is inevitable that you will send to the scaffold and the convict cell many innocent persons known to be innocent by their neighbours—in some cases, known to be innocent by the authorities. The formation of secret societies will be encouraged and fomented beyond a doubt; because the people will recognize that, for their own safety, it is impossible to remain outside either the walls of Dublin Castle, on the one hand, or the ranks of a secret and criminal organization on the other. This measure sends the popular leaders who advise the tenant to ask for a reduction of his rent, as well as the tenant who asks for that reduction, to the tender mercies of one of these Stipendiary Magistrates — magistrates who are not magistrates according to the ordinary acceptation of the term, as you know. They are magistrates who are inexperienced in law, without legal education, many of them retired officers of the Army, who have failed in other walks of life, and who, as a little bit of patronage, get dropped into a snug berth of this kind. These men will not consider whether the law allows them to do this, although this Bill allows them to do anything. They will only consider what their masters—the Government of the day—would like them to do; and they will deem opposition to the Government policy an offence against this Act. The journalist who criticizes the action of the Government, or protests against landlord tyranny and oppression, will meet with the same fate. In fact, there is no loophole of escape for any political movement in Ireland. If this Bill passes, it would be preposterous folly for any politician to attempt to cope with the powers which it gives to the Government. They will have to leave the field to others. I hope—I sincerely hope—that there may not be others to take that field. I would have done much, if I had been able to do so, last autumn, to have alleviated the stringency of the position in Ireland, to have counselled moderation amongst the Irish tenants, to have advised them to bear any suffering, to have submitted to any rack-renting, any eviction, any extermination, rather than give the Government the miserable rags and shreds of excuse which they have for this Bill. I was confident from the moment that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian directed his gigantic talent to the redress of Irish grievances, in the only way in which they ever can be redressed, and that is by allowing the Irish people to redress them for themselves—that it was only a question of time, and of a very short time, when the main principles of this Bill would be carried into effect, and would bring about a lasting reconciliation and peace between the two nations. I believe so still. I would still counsel patience. I would still urge the Irish people to submit to any oppression, to any injustice, rather than to retaliate. I would ask them to remember the weighty words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian the other evening, when he told them that he and the Liberal Party had been enabled to come thus far with us, to fight by our side against this coercion, because the Irish people had remained, as a whole, within the limits of legality. I would ask them to remember that they ought not to do anything to drive the right hon. Gentleman away from our side, or to increase his difficulties, or place him in any false position with his own countrymen. Our battle is won in Ireland. There may be some suffering to endure. There may be some tyranny, perhaps much tyranny, yet inflicted upon us—petty tyrants are always the most merciless—but it will be as nothing compared with what our people have gone through in the past. A little patience, a few years of waiting, and these clouds will be cleared away. The eternity that is written on this Bill will disappear before the brighter time, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian will be able once more to appeal to the common sense and the sense of justice of the people of England, the people of Britain; and when he will receive those full powers which will enable him to do justice to our country. Yes, I would urge these considerations upon our people, and from my place in this House I urge them. Ireland will have no place for speaking in after this Bill passes. The Party who have got to gain by violence by going beyond the law in Ireland are the present Government. This is why they have brought forward this Bill to strengthen their own miserable position and remain in Office for a few months longer. Let our people not fall into these toils that have been set for them. I greatly fear for the result; but, Sir, I will not cease to tell the people of Ireland that the situation is entirely different for them from what it was five or six years ago, and that victory for them is certain and secure. I believe that our people, as a whole, will bear in patience those sufferings and tribulations which are undoubtedly before them for the present, and that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian will find that his hand has not been sullied in the great and glorious work which he has undertaken. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House will immediately resolve itself into a Committee to consider the state of Ireland."—(*Mr. Parnell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I should not again have ventured to intrude on the House in the course of this debate had it not been for the earlier part of the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down—the least eloquent but not the least important part of that important statement. It is not my business to comment on what I venture to think is the extreme inconvenience of the course which has been taken in deferring to the fifth night of this debate and the ninth night of our debates on the introduction of this Bill the Amendment which has been moved. It is my duty to comment, however, on the extreme inconvenience to which the House is put by the course which the hon. Gentleman has adopted in discussing, in the course of his speech, three Bills, not one of which is before the House, and with regard to one of which nothing but the vaguest and most general statement has been made to Members of the House, or to Members of the other House. The hon. Gentleman began by discussing the land proposals of the Government in general terms outside of which I shall not travel. And what was the attitude he took up? It was most significant. Nobody could have listened to the words that he spoke on that subject without seeing that he meant to give the most determined and strenuous opposition to the land proposals of the Government, whatever these proposals may be, and that he intends to devote the unequalled power he possesses in Ireland to defeat the operation of any salutary measure which the Government may have the good fortune to pass. What title has he to take such a course? Are the measures that we are proposing of so narrow and jejune a character as not to deserve a respectful consideration from hon. Members below the Gangway? The hon. Member for Cork alluded to the efforts that he made in this House last autumn in order to prevent unjust evictions. If the proposals of the hon. Member himself had been carried, it is matter of common knowledge and notoriety that some of the most distressing scenes at evictions during the winter would not have been prevented. He reproached us for not carrying out the recommendations of the Cowper Commission. I state boldly in this House that neither the proposal which the hon. Member for Cork made last autumn, nor the proposal of the Cowper Commission that we rejected, and to which the hon. Member for Cork and the right hon. Gentleman opposite pin their faith, would offer relief in the matter of evictions of tenants in Ireland as extensive as the proposals which we have introduced in "another place." Therefore, if the hon. Member had so much at heart the welfare of the Irish tenantry, of which he poses in the House as the chief protector, he would not be the man to proclaim our Land policy a failure even before it is introduced into this House. He told us that he objected altogether to our land proposals, although he had not the least conception of what they were; but he also told us that he always was a conscientious convert to the principle of settling the Irish Land Question by some great measure of purchase.

MR. PARNELL: I did not say I altogether objected to the plan of the Government. As a matter of fact, I approved of it as regarded the leaseholders.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I was not then speaking of the leaseholders.

MR. PARNELL: If we are to judge by the words used by Lord Cadogan as to leaseholders, the Government propose to take the words from my Bill of last Session.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman must be aware that in the remarks I was making I was not alluding to that point at all, but to those other provisions of the Bill, by which it will, we hope, be made impossible henceforth that for non-payment of an unjust rent which a tenant is prevented from paying from no fault of his own that tenant shall suffer the extreme penalty of eviction. That the hon. Member describes as a measure for stabbing the Irish tenant in the back. He has confessed himself a convert of long standing to the solution of the Irish Question by a system of land purchase, and yet, with that conviction in his mind, and not knowing what our proposals are, he has given the Government, and given the House and the country fair warning that he means, as far as in him lies, to make our land scheme a total failure. In the words of the hon. Member for Cork, I think there is a warning to be found, which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian would do well to lay to heart. The hon. Member for Cork has clearly given us to understand that it depends on him and on his Friends whether a scheme of land purchase, which involves some repayment of instalments by the tenant, shall succeed or not.

MR. PARNELL: I did not say that at all.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman implied it. ["No!"] The hon. Gentleman who interrupts me cannot have listened to the hon. Member. The hon. Member for Cork implied that he would use his influence to prevent the tenants from paying the instalments—["No!"]—under our land purchase scheme, because the price would be unfair. That line of argument contains, in my judgment, a warning which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian should well consider; because what does it imply? It implies that whatever settlement you choose to make with Ireland—be it called Home Rule, be it not called Home Rule—a part of which is that the tenantry shall repay by instalments loans given, no matter how, it will be in the power, and it may be in the will, of the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends to come and make that plan a failure, and by that means put such a pressure on the Government of the day that any fresh terms can be exacted from the people of this country. It is quite true, it may be said, that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian is going to make a settlement so entirely satisfactory to the people of Ireland that there will never be any temptation to use the means that I have adverted to. But although the scheme may be accepted gratefully by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and although they may loyally adhere to it, I ask what security can you have that they or their successors may not some day find it inconvenient to carry out their part of the bargain, and put on the Government the pressure of which he has given us to-night so candid and, I may add, so formidable a description. In the rest of his speech the hon. Member for Cork almost entirely confined himself to criticizing my remarks in opening this debate, and I cannot be altogether silent as to some of the criticisms that he passed upon me. He began by criticizing, in very severe terms, the way in which Mr. Forster's Act of 1881 was used. It is not my business to defend the administration of Mr. Forster's Act. The Gentlemen who passed that Act sit opposite. Let them defend the manner in which it was administered. Then he went on to comment on the poverty of the statistics which I had given the House. That is a topic which has been largely worked by hon. Gentlemen opposite; but I would remind those who may be ignorant of it, that if we have not followed the precedent of Mr. Forster in 1881 we have followed the precedent of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian in 1870. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, in 1870, gave no special statistics to the House. He contented himself, as we are contenting ourselves, with the very full and copious Parliamentary Papers that lie on the Table of this House and that are in the hands of hon. Gentlemen; but, as we are upon the Act of 1870, may I venture respectfully to express my astonishment at the description of that Act given by the hon. Member for Cork. I have pointed out that crime in Ireland at this moment is far greater than it was when the right hon. Gentleman passed the Act of 1870. ["No."] That is so. But, says the hon. Member, the Act of 1870 was as mild as milk compared with the Bill that is now being brought in. I do not know what the hon. Gentleman's view of mildness may be. He told us that the Act of 1870 consisted of two clauses. [Mr. Parnell: I said a few clauses.] I would remind the House that it consisted of 40 clauses; and among the clauses of that Act, which was as mild as milk, we find, as is also found in our Bill, a provision to examine witnesses where no person is charged. Then there is the provision—which is not in our Bill—for the search of houses without warrant for documents; also a provision—which is not in our Bill—for arresting persons who are out at night; also a power to change the venue; then a power—not to be found in our Bill—of apprehending witnesses; and also a power of summary jurisdiction in regard to certain offences, given, not to two Stipendiary Magistrates, but to two ordinary magistrates at Petty Sessions, to pass sentences of imprisonment with hard labour. And who are those magistrates in Petty Sessions who were to have summary jurisdiction over those offences under the Act of 1870? The hon. Member has commented in very severe terms on the Irish Stipendiary Magistrates. He tells us that they are the mere creatures of the Executive Government. Whether they are so or not, they are the tribunal which the late Government adopted in 1882. But, as compared with these Irish Stipendiary Magistrates, who are the ordinary magistrates? Why, they are the landlords, who the hon. Member is never tired of telling us are the curse of Ireland—who are the people against whom all the agitation of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway is directed; and it is within their hands that right hon. Gentlemen opposite left the power of summary conviction, and the ability to inflict six months' imprisonment with hard labour. The hon. Gentleman made an eloquent attack on those provisions of our Bill which may be used against the Press when it incites to illegal acts. Why, under the Act of 1870, it was in the power of the Government to confiscate the whole newspaper and plant. [An hon. MEMBER: After warning.] Will the hon. Member say that if we had inserted that qualification in our Press clause, he would not have treated it with derision? So much for the provisions of that Act which the hon. Member for Cork described as mild as milk. He went on to comment, in very severe language, on the manner in which I selected certain charges of the Judges and omitted the charges of other Judges. Whether an argument is legitimate or not depends upon whether it makes for the conclusion which it is used to establish. What was the conclusion? That crime prevailed all over Ireland? Not so. I said that the charges in Galway, Limerick, Mayo, Cork, and Kerry, showed that those counties, a third of the area of Ireland, are in a very disturbed state; and I say that no attack on these learned Judges will suffice to disturb the fact that when they made those charges, they had before them adequate evidence for what they said. They discharged properly the duty imposed upon them by their high functions. I may observe that hon. Gentlemen, when a Judge says anything which they do not approve, describe him as partial and a political partizan; but, when he says anything about the absence of crime, they are happy to quote him. It is another illustration of the remarkable fact of which we have had evidence, that every witness who gives evidence against hon. Gentlemen is a liar, and everyone who gives evidence in their favour is an example of impartiality and fairness. The hon. Member for Cork appears to think that, because crime is limited, we ought not to bring in a Crimes Bill for Ireland. Let me remind him that if crime is limited, our Crimes Bill is limited also. We take powers in our Bill to limit the area of its operation, according as it is found that crime prevails. Therefore, the argument that, because one part of the country is quiet our Bill should be rejected, is not applicable to our proposals. The hon. Member criticized one or two cases to which I have referred. [*Cries of* "Three cases!"] Well, he so contrived to put the case so as to read two descriptions of one case, and if I had not risen in my place and called attention to the fact, every Member I venture to say would have thought he was dealing with a second case. [*Cries of* "Three cases!"]

MR. PARNELL: It was two cases. I read, I think, three letters, and they had reference to two cases.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is quite right. They were Hogan's case and Clarke's case. What he said was, that there was a friend on the jury. I thought that was a very interesting fact in support of my contention, that wherever there is a particular case you are sure to have a partizan jury, and that in the end justice will be defeated.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Was a charge of fraud against a maltster a partizan case?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, I shall modify my statement. I gave a particular case, and I stated there was a failure of justice. The hon. Gentleman quoted a lawyer who said that there was no failure of justice. My authority was the Judge. Then as to the County Tipperary, I referred to cases of failure of justice in Tipperary. Why? Because it was specially mentioned as a quiet county. There is no difficulty in getting cases of failure of justice in Kerry, Galway, Limerick, and Cork; but I thought it would be interesting to show that in a county said to be quiet and in a satisfactory condition, even there failures of justice were constantly arising. In Galway, Cork, and Limerick, the Judges had postponed the cases because there was no jury to be found capable of giving a proper verdict.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) asked, whether the Assizes had not been postponed because the time for the Assizes had expired?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have stated the facts; but I may call attention to the singular mode this is of carrying on a debate. Hon. Members opposite are not content with occupying a legitimate share of the time of the House, they must needs disturb me in the midst of my argument. I will not detain the House much longer; but I ask does anyone doubt, in face of the Papers before the House, that crime is increasing? Does anyone doubt that juries cannot be trusted in Party cases? Does anyone doubt that intimidation and Boycotting exist on a large scale and ought to be put down? Does anyone doubt that? [" Yes! " *from the Irish Members, and renewed Ministerial cheers.*] Then I presume those who doubt it did not listen to the speech of the hon. Member for North Fermanagh (Mr. W. Redmond), who boasted that the system of Boycotting was so deeply ingrained in the Irish people, and had reached such an admirable pitch, that now it was not necessary for the leaders to raise a finger. The system, he said, would go on of itself.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) said, the Government had stated that they were basing their Bill on the fact of Boycotting in Ireland. What he said was that previous Coercion Bills did not put down Boycotting, and that this Bill would also fail to reach it.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member refers to another part of his speech; but his interruption does not touch my allegation. The hon. Member for Cork described this Bill in language which would not be exaggerated if it applied to Poland and the Czar. Does anyone suppose that, under this Bill, any innocent man will be shut up? [*Cries of* " Yes! "] Does the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. John Morley) think that?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Yes.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Does he think it probable?

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: Yes.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Does the right hon. Gentleman next him (Sir William Harcourt) think it probable? If so, what made him pass a Bill in comparison with which our Bill is, in many respects, very mild. Our Bill will not punish a single innocent individual. What it will do, I trust, among other things, is to free from undeserved punishment the various victims now suffering under the tyranny of the National League. There are 830 gentlemen now suffering Boycotting. I leave out of account their families; I leave out of account all persons who, without being Boycotted, are afraid to do anything to bring punishment upon them; I leave out of account all those, to use the peculiar words of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, who suffer from intimidation proper; and I ask whether we ought not to set ourselves resolutely to the task of saving these innocent persons from the penalties and the bondage under which they labour in spite of the law as it exists?

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said that, in his opinion, the Bill would deprive a large portion of Her Majesty's subjects of rights which were highly valued in England. It appeared probable, owing to the political combination which now existed in the House, that this most mischievous Bill would pass. Those amongst English Members who were opposed to it felt that if it was all they could do, the least they could do was to make a protest, ineffectual and unavailing though it might be, against the wrong that was about to be done in permanently depriving the Irish people of liberties enjoyed and highly valued by their fellow-citizens in England. They were told the other day by the Chief Secretary for Ireland that the Bill was "extreme," but now it appeared to be quite a mild measure.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that he had referred to his speech, and had found that he had used the word "extreme," attributed to him by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, with regard to only one clause.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said, that hon. Members might be excused if they weighted the Bill with the extreme character put upon it by the right hon. Gentleman himself. He understood the Chief Secretary to urge that in political cases, Irish juries could not be relied upon to give verdicts according to the evidence, and yet it was those very cases that the right hon. Gentleman intended to leave to be tried in Ireland.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that his statement was, that wherever Party feeling ran high, Irish juries could not be trusted to give verdicts according to the evidence; and, therefore, it was proposed in certain cases to change the venue to this country, where the same Party feeling did not exist, and juries were not subject to the same intimidation.

MR. BRADLAUGH asked, what could be meant in Ireland by Party questions if they were not political? [MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Agrarian.] If trials for treason, sedition, and seditious libel were to be left to juries in Ireland, why were trials for other offences to be brought to England? Surely, the offences named were essentially of a Party character. The Chief Secretary, when challenged for his authority with reference to some statistics of crime which he thought justified the Bill, said he made the statement upon his official responsibility, having reasonably satisfied himself of the value of the evidence upon which he based the statement. But it was not his responsibility that was in question—it was the responsibility of that House, which was asked to vote the powers to him. When the right hon. Gentleman asked them to change the law permanently, he ought to adduce better evidence than statements made upon his official responsibility. It was for the House, and not merely for the right hon. Gentleman, to be satisfied as to the necessity for the measure. It was worse than useless to charge upon the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and his Government that, in previous times, they introduced Coercion Bills, when the whole reason for the present Ministry being in power was, that the right hon. Gentleman had proposed a remedy, knowing that coercion had failed. Practically, they had been told that crime and outrage were less, because the National League was stronger; and the Chief Secretary had attributed this partly to what he called the unequalled power of the hon. Member for Cork. But why did not the Government deal with the hon. Member for Cork frankly? If it be true that it were he and his Colleagues alone who were responsible, why did not the Government do what Tory Governments in the past had had the courage to do against rebellious persons—namely, introduce a Bill of Attainder against him and them, and not punish all the rest of the nation by perpetual deprivation of their rights? Boycotting had not increased of late. There was as much when the Government came into Office as there was now. There never was a more wretched case presented for a Coercion Bill, and certainly for a Coercion Bill that was intended to be permanent. The Government ought to have tried remedies before attempting to apply punishment. In the very face of their own witnesses, and the recommendation that existing evils should be dealt with by remedial legislation, it was a blunder to attempt to take away rights which we in this country had valued for centuries, not because men had been incited to the use of arms, but because men had exerted themselves to the uttermost within the limits of the law to prevent crimes of violence while they defended their own rights. He had heard the Leader of the House say, in words which might have been a menace if they had come from other lips, that the second reading of the Bill was to be carried before the ordinary Easter Holidays. What would be the effect of this Bill? The Government might suppress public meetings and arrest Members; but they would only secure an outward appearance of order. Force was no remedy. To hold the contrary was to believe in the old system of brute provocation, which never failed to excite vengeance. The Government wanted to hurry this Bill through the House. Was this to prevent the country from speaking out upon it? He believed they were to be asked to read the measure a second time before Easter in order that the country might be prevented from speaking out upon it. There were many men who voted against the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) last year because they feared the burden of his Land Purchase scheme; but their protest would assuredly be heard against a Bill which compensated landlords who, causing the wrong, had increased the burdens of the overweighted British taxpayer. He felt he should be untrue to the constituency which elected him, and to the wider constituency for which he had a right to speak, and from which he undertook to bring messages to that House before long, unless he at least said that he regarded this Bill as one of the most shameful and indefensible violations of liberty that had ever been attempted by any Government within the last century.

MR. EVELYN (Deptford): Sir, having the honour to represent a constituency containing a considerable Irish element, I trust that the House will allow me, in a very few words, to state the reasons why I feel bound to vote against the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). Notwithstanding such vehement invectives and imputations as we have just heard from the Junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh), public opinion in the country will, I think, acknowledge that, in bringing forward the present measure, Her Majesty's Government were actuated by high and conscientious motives. To me, individually, it is a matter of regret that, without any pressing or proved necessity, a measure should have been introduced which, in some of its clauses, at least, is acknowledged to be an extreme measure of exceptional legislation for Ireland. Yet it must be evident to candid and impartial minds that, since the action taken by the Government is not the easiest or most convenient from a Party point of view, and since it was sure to lead to a strenuous opposition in this House, and to a stormy agitation in the country, that action must have been prompted simply by a sense of what its authors deemed to be their duty. The attacks on the Government during the present debate have proceeded from two of the four minorities into which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has declared that the House is divided—that is, from the Irish Party on the one hand, and, on the other, from the regular Opposition. Now, with regard to the Irish Party, it must be admitted that, in opposing coercion, they have been straightforward and consistent. In attacking the Government they are acting within their right; and though their language may be somewhat strong, some allowance should be made for the Oriental fervour of the Irish temperament; and I, for one, would not be disposed to connect the Irish Party with crime, or be too hard on them for speeches delivered in this House during the excitement of debate, or at agitated public meetings in the country. Admitting, as I do, their honesty of purpose, I am willing to believe in their disclaimer of all sympathy with crime. But the language of the regular Opposition is scarcely entitled to the same indulgent consideration. And when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian rises in his place on the Front Opposition Bench, and, in solemn tones, lectures down on the present occupants of the Treasury Bench, as if in this matter of Irish coercion they were sinners above all the Galileans. I cannot quite agree with the hon. Member for Northampton that there is anything unfair in reminding the Member for Mid Lothian that his culpability is greater than that of any Gentleman in this House, not excepting the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. The hon. Member for Cork, in the eloquent and impressive speech delivered by him this evening, favoured us with a laboured analysis of this Irish Coercion Bill of the Government, which is not yet printed. He also contended that the Gladstonian Coercion Act of 1870 was less stringent in its provisions than the Bill now under discussion. But on that particular point he was completely refuted by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour); and I cannot but feel surprised that the hon. Member for Cork, who is usually more careful, should have committed himself to a statement so inaccurate, that it seems to have been made at haphazard. Then the hon. Member for Cork adverted, at considerable length, to some jury cases, and to a Land Bill of the Government which is now before the other House; but it is somewhat remarkable that, throughout the whole of his speech, he scarcely made a passing allusion to the Amendment which he brought forward. Now, in bringing forward that Amendment, I have no doubt that the hon. Member for Cork acted in accordance with Constitutional precedent; but though the Amendment taken by itself may be perfectly regular, yet it seems open to the imputation of being perfectly unpractical. We have already, in the Reports of Commissions and in the Returns laid laid on the Table of the House, ample information as to the state of Ireland. To go into Committee of the Whole House on that subject would be a mere waste of time. The Amendment then viewed by itself is simply obstructive; it is a part of a policy of delay, a policy scarcely worthy, if I may say so, of the hon. Member for Cork. But, Sir, when I consider the Amendment not by itself, but connection with the violent and intemperate attacks on the Government which have characterized this discussion, then the whole matter clearly resolves itself into a challenge of confidence in the present Government. We, on this side of the House, have to meet an attempt to overthrow the present Administration, and to replace it by a Ministry presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. Such an attempt, if successful, would not, in my humble judgment, tend to the public advantage. It is true that, as an Unionist, and in the interest of the Union itself, I deplore the revival of coercion in a permanent form, and the departure from the policy of Lord Carnarvon in 1885. During my Election contests in 1885 and 1886, I encountered the arguments of my able and eloquent Oriental antagonist, Mr. Lalmohun Ghose, by maintaining that coercion was a thing of the past, and that the Imperial Parliament would do for Ireland all, and more than all, that she could expect from a Native Parliament at College Green. A similar line was adopted by other Conservative candidates; but, henceforth, I fear, that we must look abroad for other arguments in support of the Union. The adoption of the Amendment could but lead to delay, and the hon. Member for Northampton has truly said that the Bill is "sure to pass." Then, why should all English and Scotch legislation, why should all legislation affecting the working classes of the United Kingdom, be indefinitely postponed, in order to prolong an useless discussion, which can only end in one way, as hon. Members have already made up their minds? And be it remembered, also, that though this particular Bill is new, yet the subject itself has been discussed since the beginning of the century; and the present Bill is said to be the 87th Coercion Bill since the Union, and is based on the same principles as former measures of the same character. Let that which must be done, whether right or wrong, be done quickly. Surely, the prolongation of this discussion would not be advantageous either to Ireland, or to the Irish Party in this House. Surely, it would be better to get rid of this painful subject, and to proceed without delay to the consideration of the remedial measures which are to follow. To those measures I look forward with confidence, hoping and believing that they may not only complete and perfect the Land Acts of 1881 and 1885, but also succeed in restoring to distracted Ireland the blessings of tranquillity, prosperity, and contentment.

Mr. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) said, he felt bound to enter his protest against this Bill. After waiting for eight months to see what the Government were going to do for the Irish people to combat the proposals of the ex-Prime Minister, they had nothing before the country but a Coercion Bill. The Irish had looked to the Government for bread; but they had given them a stone. He looked upon the Bill introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) as being nothing more nor less than a humiliating confession that the Conservative Party were unable to govern Ireland by the use of Constitutional means. It seemed to him disastrous that in this Jubilee year a Conservative Government should be engaged in passing a Coercion Bill for some of Her Majesty's subjects. What a sight this must be for the inhabitants of the Colonies! The British Empire was a grand one—one of the grandest the world had ever seen—and, on the whole, it was governed better than any other. But there was one very black spot on it, and the black spot was in the United Kingdom. Many had been the experiments tried with regard to the government of Ireland, and these had all been disastrous failures. What did history teach us? Why, that the only time Ireland was tranquil and prosperous was when the people of that country had the opportunity of managing their own affairs. In the short time of the Grattan Parliament the people of Ireland were more prosperous and more contented than at any other period. And now the Government had introduced a Bill which was a barrier, a dam, to keep back the great tide of emancipation. But it would only last for a short time, and then it would be swept away like chaff before the wind. The Irish people had never despaired, even in their darkest hours, that they would gain back their liberties which had been taken from them. They heard very much about self-government, and they heard that this was the period of self-government, and yet what was the fact with regard to Ireland? There were five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland who came to that House with a demand for Home Rule; but there were also other Members from Ireland, from England, from Scotland, and, he was sorry to say, a few even from liberty-loving Wales, who stood up and said to the Irish people—"You shall not have your desires." Why should that be so? The majority of the Irish Representatives had no more to do with the government of Ireland than they had to do with the government of Japan. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, in introducing his Bill, referred to the National League. He (Mr. Thomas) could not condemn the National League as the Chief Secretary had done. But if the National League was to be complained of in this respect, it was easy to do away with it. It would not need any prosecutions to bring about that result. All that was needed was the establishment of a National Assembly in Ireland, and then the National League would cease to exist.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N. W.) said, he was of opinion that the Government had not exercised the powers with which they were already invested for the government of Ireland, and therefore he objected to their coming to Parliament for exceptional legislation. There was one conclusion which all persons who had noticed the facts must come to, and that was that the Government up to the present moment had displayed the most lamentable vacillation and want of determination in conducting the affairs of Ireland. It was not during the Government of the late Prime Minister, it was not during the Chief Secretaryship of his right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. J. Morley), that they had the lamentable spectacle of a high judicial official declaring that the Government were tampering with the law. It was not during the Chief Secretaryship of his right hon. Friend that they had the occasion of the removal of a prisoner to gaol transformed into a triumphant progress in Ireland. It was a very common thing for hon. Members on the Government side of the House to say that the Liberal Party were indifferent to the cause of law and order. He held that the cause of law and order was of as high moment to Gentlemen who sat on the Liberal Benches of the House as it was to hon. Members opposite; but the Liberal Party had different opinions as to what law and order meant. They did not think law and order were best illustrated by the laconic telegram of a Government official, who, with flippant brutality, directed the police to "shoot them if they resist." They did not think the cause of law and order was best served by confiding the Administrative Government to the hands of gentlemen, a typical representative of whom met with the severest rebuke from a great English Judge for having incited to disorder and violence in Belfast. He should like to contrast the position which the Government had now taken up on the Irish Question with that taken up by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) in a speech which he delivered a short time ago, and in which he was supposed to disclose the policy of the Government on the Irish Question. The noble Lord declared his belief that rents throughout Ireland were not too high, but notwithstanding that belief the Government proposed to make an inquiry, and if they found as a result of the inquiry that rents were too high they should take measures to meet the evil. But now that the Government Commission had made a Report and declared that not only were the ordinary rents throughout the country too high, but that the judicial rents also were too high, and when it was admitted by the right hon. Member opposite that the cause of the agitation in Ireland was the inability of tenants to pay the existing rents, the Government met the case with a demand for coercion. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] He contended that the Liberal policy was the more statesmanlike, more straightforward, plainer, and more common-sense, because the Liberal policy would at once remove the cause of the disorder, and would thereby render recourse to the odious system of coercion unnecessary. It would be interesting for the House to compare the position taken up by the distinguished statesman whose loss they all regretted so much—Mr. Forster—with that now taken up by the Chief Secretary. When Mr. Forster brought forward the Coercion Bill of 1881, under very similar circumstances to the present, the Land League being then said to be paramount as the National League was said to be now, he gave the House statistics of crime, which showed that in the last three months of 1880 there were no fewer than 1,696 agrarian crimes committed; and again, when the Coercion Bill of 1882 was brought in, he showed that in the last three months of 1881 the number of agrarian offences amounted to 1,417. But what did the statistics of to-day show? Why, that the number of agrarian offences for the last three months of 1886 had fallen as low as 162; and that was the state of things which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) wished to persuade the House demanded a stringent measure of coercion. They were now, however, told that the Government did not rest the necessity for their Bill upon agrarian crime. All he could say was that, in 1881, Mr. Forster told the House that he rested his demand for the Coercion Bill of that day entirely upon the abnormal existence of agrarian crime; and at the same time he told the House that after mature consideration he had come to the conclusion that it was not a wise expedient or practicable to legislate againt Boycotting. He (Mr. Atherley-Jones) admitted that Boycotting was an offence the existence of which should be deplored, but at the same time he could not fail to recognize the fact that tenants were driven to have recourse to Boycotting in self-defence; and that far more blame was to be attached to those who, by cruel and tyrannical conduct, drove the poor people into the commission of offences than there was to the poor people who had recourse to somewhat primeval remedies for the evils under which they were groaning. By the powers which the Government were conferring upon Resident Magistrates to punish acts or omissions they were creating crimes which were not to be found in the Statute Book; and the Magistrates to whom that extraordinary power was conferred were entirely dependent upon the Executive Government, and were selected from a class who were hostile to the people and aliens in blood, in religions, and in social instincts. Those were most objectionable and dangerous powers to confer upon such a class of men. But that was not all. There was also conferred upon those same men a most arbitrary power over the Press. Any one of them would be able to send a newspaper editor to prison for six months upon the very indefinite charge of inciting to commit an offence. He admitted to the full that juries in Ireland were influenced by bias; but they were proposing to take the trials of offenders from juries influenced in favour of the tenant to juries influenced in favour of the landlord. Therefore such a proposal was neither just nor reasonable. They also proposed to send men for trial in England. That proposition had not been received with considerable enthusiasm on the other side; it meant that a man was to be brought over to England charged with a crime, labelled as it were by the Government with the declaration that he ought to be convicted, but would not be in his own country. He went for trial with a rope round his neck. He understood that the Lord Lieutenant sitting in Council was to have the power of declaring any association an illegal association, and any person connected with such an association as committing an offence under the Act. They were committing to a political executive officer the judicial function of deciding whether certain acts were offences under the Act, which was contrary to all the history of jurisprudence, and an enormity which could not be contemplated without condemning the whole of the proposals. It was very difficult at this stage of the debate to say anything new, but he would appeal to hon. Members opposite to pause before they committed themselves to that coercion. He appealed to them to consider whether it was by such methods that they were likely to maintain the union between the two countries. He would quote the words of one whom he would still call one of their great Leaders—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Birmingham (Mr. John Bright)—which seemed singularly appropriate to the present occasion. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "You would not have a word of it changed nor touched, and yet, strange to say, everybody but your own party believes that your policy makes union absolutely impossible, that you conduct the affairs of Ireland on such principles that you create a sense of wrong which overrides all written words and all parchment covenants."

He would also recall to the memory of the House the eloquent words of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), when he appealed to them to stand by him in that great Constitutional conflict. So far as the decorum of debate and the dignity of the House permitted, they would stand by him; but they had little hope, while there was the force of Liberal Unionists or Liberal Coercionists against them, of being able to obtain much in the House. But they knew that before long they would be able to meet hon. Members opposite when the great inquest of the nation was made. At Liverpool the Liberal Unionists had seen the handwriting on the wall, and they believed that, notwithstanding that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had constituted himself gratuitous election agent to the Conservative Party, they would, when they came before the country, be successful in reversing the verdict which was the result of accident on the last occasion, and in placing the union between the two countries on the permanent and suitable foundations of mutual goodwill and respect.

Mr. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg) said, that the Government asked for special privileges, but did not tell why they asked for them. They appealed to the House to give them extraordinary powers for extraordinary purposes; and when Members objected, the Government said—"You do not know what the powers are. Pass the Bill." That implied a faith in right hon. Gentlemen opposite which he, for one, did not feel. Liberal Members were blamed because they did not repudiate Boycotting, maiming, and so on. But that was pretended indignation, because hon. Gentlemen opposite knew perfectly well that, whether English, Irish, Scotch, or Welsh, they all equally repudiated those crimes. But since the beginning of the world there never had been a popular uprising against oppression in which the hands of some of those who were seeking for liberty had not been stained at some time or other with righteous blood. What was the difficulty? Between two parts of this great nation an animosity existed which was shocking and painful. It was getting worse and worse, because Gentlemen opposite strove to keep up a Paper Union. It had developed into opposition to the law, and the Queen's writ had almost ceased to run in Ireland. A friend made it a matter of complaint to him the other day that if a Land Bill were granted to the Irish people they would still demand Home Rule. Of course they would. A Land Bill was only part of the demand they made. They must go to the root of the matter if they wished to deal effectually with it, and the root of the matter was to give the people of Ireland the power of self-government. The description given of the state of Ireland by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not a whit overdrawn. He said that in every part of Ireland the triumph of lawlessness was complete. That was a pitiable fact for them to recognize; but the Government, because they were infatuated with coercion, were trying to secure the continuance of the mischiefs that had produced the present deplorable state of things. The remedy of the Government was force, and force alone. The way in which their Bills were introduced showed what the Government meant. First came the Closure, then the Coercion Bill, and then the Land Bill. They ought to have begun the other way, and produced the remedial measure first, when, perhaps, the others might have become unnecessary. It seemed as if the real object of the Bill before the House was not so much to amend the Criminal Law in Ireland, as to enable the landlords to get their May rents. There was, no doubt, great disaffection in Ireland; but not so much as there was, and crime and outrage had also decreased. The true reason of this diminution was that for some time past the Irish people had understood that there was a large and an increasing number of people in England who were determined to give them a fair chance of governing themselves, if they would do so in harmony with the Union and with this great Empire. They believed the Irish people meant to do so, and they were, therefore, ready to trust them. They were ready to adopt this remedy because they believed that the great evil that the Government had adduced as a reason for their Bill had been produced, fostered, and nourished by the very coercion which they now sought to make permanent. For generations the wealth, the rank, the power, and the intelligence of Ireland had been all on one side; yet the masses of the people, who were poor, ignorant, downtrodden, were beating them after all. Obedience to the law had been spoken of as a very valuable thing to obtain in Ireland; but there were some things still more valuable—namely, to insure the loyalty of the Irish people—but that would never be done by coercion. It had been urged that the disaffection existing in Ireland was due to the influence of secret societies, but he denied the allegation; his contention was that that disaffection was due to long and persistent misgovernment. He believed that the Government would find some of the provisions of their Bill to be too strong for their Liberal Unionist allies, and that they would consent to tone the measure down rather than go out of Office. Nobody imagined that they would maintain to the end the whole of their most extraordinary and obnoxious proposals; but the country would remember that, although they could not force them through the House, they had proposed them, and had, as far as they could, outraged the feelings of Ireland. The majority on which the Government relied was dwindling down. They talked about the disintegration of the Empire. He advised them to look after their own disintegration. Twenty-five per cent of their boasted majority had left them already. He well remembered being present at a meeting at which the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, speaking with reference to Ireland, asked his hearers whether they were content, after some 80 years of failure, to renew once more the dreary experience of repressive legislation; declared that it was only by un-Constitutional means that we maintained peace and order in Ireland; and compared our rule in that country with that of Russia in Poland. He should wish for nothing more amusing in the irony of history than to hear the right hon. Member for West Birmingham of to-day criticized by the Joseph Chamberlain who made that speech. To continue the attempt to rule Ireland by force and coercion was not really governing that country. As a great man had well said, a nation was not governed which had perpetually to be conquered. He believed that the mischievous policy now being pursued by the Government would, if carried out, destroy every hope of peace and reconciliation between the people of Ireland and of Great Britain, and would tend to impair the dignity, the strength, and the safety of this great country. He must give his vote against that abominable Bill.

Dr. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.) said, that the introduction of that measure—the 87th Coercion Bill which this country had seen—was a practical admission of the utter incapacity of the Ministry to govern Ireland. If he were asked to describe this Bill, he should say it was a Bill for the promotion of crime, for crime would follow every step taken to enforce it. Its object was to aid the landlord in collecting his March rents, but he doubted very much whether it would succeed. The Bill made a very serious inroad on the liberties of the Irish people; but the Irish people would close their ranks, and they would destroy the Bill and those who had produced it, as they had destroyed other Coercion Bills and other Governments. As to the charges of the Irish Judges, they were very flagrant examples of what went on in Ireland in the name of law and order. He had never heard of English Judges, in all his long experience of the Bar, delivering harangues from the Bench on economic and social questions. No English Judge would lower himself by doing such a thing. An English Judge, in his charge to the Grand Jury, never went beyond the facts disclosed by the depositions submitted to him. It was only the Irish Judges who delivered harangues on the state of the country based upon private reports, which might be open to criticism. When policemen organized secret societies for assassination and outrage, and then betrayed those whom they had entrapped, it was not surprising that juries refused to convict on the evidence of those who manufactured the crimes they denounced. The House ought to have more trustworthy evidence before it consented to take away liberty in the way proposed by this Bill, which was the most unjustifiable Coercion Bill ever submitted to the House. It was his firm conviction that the Bill would drive all complaint and disaffection under the surface, and then they would have to meet those who relied upon the dagger and assassination. He did not desire that result—he should deplore it—but all history told them that that would be the consequence. He contended that there was no case whatever for the Bill, and all that the Amendment asked was that the House should have real facts, instead of the anonymous tittle-tattle, to rely upon.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I rise, Sir, at this late stage of the debate to address some observations to the House, which I feel will of necessity be somewhat more lengthened than hon. Members—at least on the opposite side of the House—would wish them to be. My excuse, will, I think, be a valid one when I remind the House that during the progress of this debate the speeches which have been made on the other side have one and all been an attack upon an organization for which during the last four or five years I have been almost wholly responsible. The organization I refer to is the Irish National League, that which grew up in Ireland under the Crimes Act administered by Earl Spencer. That organization, which to-day is established in almost every parish in Ireland, has been violently and bitterly attacked by hon. Members opposite, and they have unfairly endeavoured to attribute every disorder in Ireland to it. Now, at the outset of my observations I desire to say that I am willing to accept full responsibility for anything that can be brought against the organization, and while I am ready to defend any act that can be alleged against it, I have no intention whatever of disavowing the responsibility which attaches to me. On the contrary, I am proud of the position which the National League has assumed, and I challenge any hon. Member to make a case against it. Now, Sir, whatever may be said by apologists for the Chief Secretary, I maintain that the universal verdict of those who come to read the events of history which are taking place at the present time, will be that there never was so weak a case made in favour of coercion of any form, and that there never has been a more drastic proposal for coercion made by a Government upon exceptionally insufficient grounds. What did the case of the Chief Secretary consist of? It rested chiefly on a number of anecdotes—silly anonymous anecdotes, which I cannot help thinking must have been told to the right hon. Gentleman in the course of an afternoon tea party, during his visit to Ireland. These ridiculous stories are wholly unauthenticated, and even as they stand it is quite evident that the plea put forward as an excuse for want of authentication is not justified. The Chief Secretary preferred for his own purposes—and it was a course which subsequently proved to be a wise one—to ask the House to take these anecdotes upon his personal responsibility; he did not add from his lengthened experience of Ireland, and his intimate knowledge of her people. If he had done so, perhaps the House might have felt disposed to accept the right hon. Gentleman's assurances. But it is quite certain that the stories he has brought forward are of such a nature that he can have had no opportunity of inquiring into the particulars of them. The right hon. Gentleman simply asks the House to take for gospel truth what is the mere idle gossip of Dublin Castle and the officials there, and upon this tittle-tattle to fritter away the liberties of a people. Such a course is calculated, I am afraid, to inflict upon our unfortunate country a still greater injustice than any which this Parliament has already inflicted. Let me suppose even that all these stories told by the right hon. Gentlemen were true. Then, surely, the most that can be said of them is that they afford a very slender excuse for depriving a nation and a people of the Constitution under which they live — for abolishing trial by jury and gagging the Press, and suppressing the right of public meeting and free speech. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Members laugh; but they do not seem to have studied the provisions of this Bill, although they are going blindly to vote for it. More than that, the measure proposes to establish a number of petty despotisms all over the country, each vieing with the other in goading the people into exasperation. I have said that there was a good deal of wisdom in the course which has been taken by the Chief Secretary, in carefully concealing from the House the particulars of the cases he has brought forward, so that we should have very little opportunity of bringing to a test the accuracy of the stories he has related. But the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England was not so discreet in the speech which he delivered last night. That hon. and learned Gentleman saw at once the weakness of the case which had been made out by the Chief Secretary, and he endeavoured to supplement it by giving the particulars in regard to some of these statements. I am not going to make any accusation against the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England. I am not going to say that he would for one moment state to this House particulars which he did not believe to be true, or use arguments he knew could not be sustained by facts. It is, however, very instructive to consider the manner in which he dealt with the case which he undertook to quote to the House. I should like to know whether he would have been prepared to deal with it in a similar manner if it had been a report affecting an English trial? The hon. and learned Gentleman, in supporting the contention of the Government that there had been a failure of justice in recent trials in Ireland, quoted from *The Freeman's Journal*, and made a great deal of the fact that his report was taken from that newspaper. Now, the case in question was one which was tried at the Kerry Assizes; it was that of a man named Pat Hickey, who was charged with Moonlighting; and the report went on to say that the jury, without hearing any evidence for the defence, acquitted the prisoner. Now, if the case had occurred in England and not in Ireland, what would have been the comment of the learned Attorney General or of any other impartial reader? Would it not have been that the case for the prosecution was so weak and so little backed up by evidence that, as a matter of fact, the jury acquitted the prisoner because there was no evidence before them which would justify them in convicting him? Nevertheless, because the case had reference to Ireland, the argument of the learned Attorney General was this—that because the jury acquitted the prisoner without requiring to hear any evidence for the defence, forsooth, the prisoner was guilty; that the 12 jurymen were forsworn, that they sympathized with Moonlighting, and that, therefore, they acquitted him. Now I happen to know the particulars of the case which the hon. and learned Gentleman has been so unfortunate as to cite. I happened, as his counsel, to defend the prisoner; and I invite the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland to confer with the counsel who prosecuted for the Crown, if he wishes to ascertain whether the statement I am about to make is not strictly accurate. The counsel for the prosecution is not a Nationalist, on the contrary, he is a Conservative; but anybody who knows Mr. John Atkinson, Q.C., knows that he is a man of honour and of principle; and, therefore, I am prepared to abide by his confirmation of my statement as to whether the Judge who tried the case did not charge for the acquittal of the prisoner. That Judge was no other than Mr. Justice O'Brien, who delivered the violent political harangue of which so much capital has been made by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House. The case made a deep impression on my mind. I listened to the charge of the Judge to the Grand Jury, and I listened to the figures given by him of the state of crime in Ireland. I knew that crime was still rampant, to a great extent, over some portions of the County of Kerry; but, at the same time, I knew that there were men who were anxious to prefer false charges against others in order to gratify private malice or curry favour with some Irish official. They had a ready means of doing that from the existence of crime in that county. Having listened to the extraordinary speech of the Judge on that occasion, I may say that this was the first case of Moonlighting that came before him. As I have said, I received a brief in the case; but I was most careful to inquire, before accepting it, whether there was a shadow of evidence against the prisoner; not because I wished to shirk the duty of defending a prisoner, but because I did not desire my public position as secretary to the National League to be identified to any degree in the eyes of any misguided people in Kerry with a defence of Moonlighting. I cross-examined the principal witness for the prosecution, and after my cross-examination the Judge asked a few questions which clearly convinced me he did not believe a word of the witness's story. I proceeded no further with the case, but left it in the hands of the Judge, whereupon he charged for an acquittal, and the jury acquitted the man accordingly. The Chief Secretary was more wise. He gave us no names or any means of ascertaining the particulars of the cases to which he referred, and yet, notwithstanding the slender materials we had to work upon, in order to bring these stories to a test, I think it will be admitted that my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), in the able and eloquent speech with which he opened the debate this evening, very clearly exposed the character of some of the cases which were quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. I propose to take some others which have been selected by Dublin Castle and supplied to the Chief Secretary as a proof of the necessity for a sweeping change in the administration of the law. Some of the cases, I admit, have been so carefully concealed that it has been impossible to bring them to a test. But I maintain that through their own inherent absurdity they have altogether broken down. Let me take the first of these cases, which was given by the right. hon. Gentleman as an illustration of the way in which Irishmen regard the jury system. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I heard the other day of a man over 70 years of age who applied to be excluded from the panel, and he was told that he should be so relieved. Next day he returned and said he would rather be on the panel, for it might give him an opportunity of serving a friend."

Now, if the right hon. Gentleman had consulted the Attorney General for Ireland, it would have been the duty of the right hon. and learned Gentleman to tell him that a story like that, and, indeed, many of the stories we have heard of jurymen—has been simply invented for the purpose of imposing on the credulity of Englishmen who go over to Ireland. This particular instance is one which never could have occurred, because there was no official before whom the man could go to have his name put on or taken off the jury list except the Judge, whose duty it was to revise it; and yet we are asked to believe that in this particular case the learned Judge consented to take a man off the jury panel one day and to put him on again the next. But the fables which the right hon. Gentleman appears to have collected in his short tour in Ireland are so absurd that I fail to see how they could have imposed upon any rational man. Here is another of the amusing fables with which the right hon. Gentleman interested the House while framing the case with which to do away with the liberties of our unfortunate country. The right hon. Gentleman said—"I heard the other day"—most of these stories begin with, "I heard the other day"—but before I read the passage, let me make one other remark. An hon. Friend of mine, when he feels tempted to express a doubt as to the authenticity of a story, usually interrupts the speaker by saying—"Is this a true story?" Probably he would not have been allowed to interrupt the Chief Secretary in that way; but in regard to the story I am about to quote, I have no hesitation in saying that it is not only not a true story, but that it would tell against the right hon. Gentleman himself if there were any truth in it. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I heard the other day of jurors in a respectable position who had begged of an officer whose duty it was to order some jurors to 'stand by' that he would include them in the jurors to be asked to 'stand by.' The officer refused, but said that if they did not come up to be balloted for he would not fine them."

If that story is true, what does it prove? It proves this—the man who has the privilege of ordering a juror to "stand by" is the prosecuting Crown Solicitor. I believe hon. Members have heard it said, on the authority of the right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland, that he is responsible for ordering jurors to "stand by" at a trial; therefore, if the story of the Chief Secretary is true, it proves that, in order to ascertain how the jury is affected, and to test what sort of verdict is likely to be given, the Crown Solicitor must have an audience with the jurors before putting them into the box. A story of this kind certainly gives the House a glimpse of the practices resorted to by the Crown in Ireland, and which, as I maintain, have caused the failure of your jury system, and the disrespect with which your administration of law is regarded in Ireland. Now, Sir, we have also had from the right hon. Gentleman some very garbled extracts from the addresses of some of the Judges of Ireland. That fact, however, has been so much commented upon by other speakers that I will not dwell on it in detail further than to observe, upon the extraordinary statement of the Chief Secretary, that these Judges are not political partizans; that they are not influenced in their utterances by the politics of the day. That, Sir, is notoriously the case in Ireland. I believe the House is perfectly familiar with the fact that most of the Irish Judges—certainly three of them—whose charges were quoted by the Chief Secretary in his speech, have had seats in this House, and occupied official positions in this House under various Governments. Now, let me suppose the case of the right hon. Gentleman the present Attorney General for Ireland. With regard to that right hon. and learned Gentleman, I will say that we should have quite as much confidence in his decisions as we have now in the decisions of the other Irish Judges. But it is absurd of the Chief Secretary to ask us to believe that the present Attorney General for Ireland has no political opinions of his own. We refuse to believe that the Attorney General for Ireland, as well as others who have preceded him, and who have occupied official positions in the House of Commons, take up politics as a profession when they come into this House, and that they cease to hold any political sentiments the moment they leave this House. The speech of the Chief Secretary pointed to three difficulties in Ireland. The first difficulty he complains of is general intimidation, or Boycotting; the second, the difficulty of procuring evidence; and the third, the failure of juries to convict. Now, let us consider for a moment these difficulties in relation to the remedies for them proposed by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman. The difficulty of general intimidation, or Boycotting, he proposes to cure by giving extended powers to Resident Magistrates. Now, everyone knows that during the course of the past few years the Resident Magistrates have dealt under the existing law of Ireland with cases of general intimidation, and cases of Boycotting, and it must be well known that whenever a charge of Boycotting or intimidation is brought against a man there is nothing to prevent the Resident Magistrates from applying the existing law to such cases. But it is intended, under the proposed Bill, to give these gentlemen very extended powers, and, therefore, I should like the House to understand what the class of gentlemen is to whom it is proposed to give these extraordinary powers. What are the qualifications necessary for a Resident Magistrate in Ireland? First of all, he must have friends sufficiently influential to be able to beg the position for him from the Executive. In the next case, he must be over head and ears in debt and difficulties before he is able to make out a strong case; and, thirdly, he must have had a military training somewhere or other, or if it has happened by accident that he has received a legal training of any kind, then he must never have been able to make a penny at the Bar. Now, I have a great passion for collecting autographs, and quite lately I had an opportunity of looking up the autographs of some very remarkable personages, most of whom have passed away. Among these political autographs, I find that there are many letters to the Lord Lieutenant of the day, applying for the position of Resident Magistrate. I propose to read from the evidence put forward by their own friends—landlords and land agents in Ireland—what their idea is of the qualification of an Irish Resident Magistrate. The first letter I will read is from a gentleman who was certainly well known in the political world, and who made himself particularly remarkable for the bitter hostility he offered to the land legislation of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). I refer to the Knight of Kerry, a staunch champion of the landlords of Ireland. Here is his idea of the particular qualities that fit a man to occupy the position of Resident Magistrate, and to administer the extra powers which the Chief Secretary proposes to intrust them with. This is a letter addressed to Lord Carlisle when he was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—

> "My dear Lord,
>
> "The kindness which your Excellency has shown me since I have had the honour of being known to you encourages me to apply to you on a subject deeply interesting to me, although I fear it will need all your kindness to excuse the presumption of the application"—

what modesty!—

> "My brother (Steven Fitzgerald) having but a small provision, my father applied to Lord Clarendon, when Lord Lieutenant, for a situation for him, and received an encouraging reply with a conditional promise; but, nothing having resulted therefrom, he continued to live an idle life at home, and fell into habits injurious to himself and distressing to his family, who could not but lament to see considerable talents, united with an excellent natural disposition, completely going to waste. He has latterly, I rejoice to say, been leading a different life, and recently formed an attachment for a most interesting young Scotch lady, one who, especially in point of deep religious feeling, is all that could be wished for, and their union, so very desirable, is only delayed in reference to his financial position. Under these circumstances, I venture to ask your Excellency's kind aid in procuring a situation for him. That of Stipendiary Magistrate is one for which I think he would be extremely well qualified, as he has regularly and very efficiently—"

notwithstanding his idle habits—

> "discharged his duties as a J.P. in this parish and the neighbouring district; but if that post be unattainable, some one of less value would just now be very acceptable. I really dislike, more than I can well say, thus troubling your Excellency in such a personal matter—"

notwithstanding, I have in my possession a letter troubling his Excellency for another friend later on—

> "but I feel at least that you will make great excuse for my so doing in a case where more than the temporal interests of an only brother are involved.
>
> "I have the honour to be,
> "My dear Lord,
> "Your Excellency's very obedient
> "and obliged servant,
> "P. Fitzgerald,
> "Knight of Kerry."

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Was Mr. Fitzgerald appointed?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: Yes, he was.

Colonel KING-HARMAN (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I hope the hon. Gentleman will give the House some proof of the authenticity of this letter.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: I am prepared to show the letter to the hon. and gallant Gentleman. If he is acquainted with the handwriting of the Knight of Kerry he will see that it is perfectly genuine. I would, however, ask the House to accept my word, being personally acquainted with the handwriting of the Knight of Kerry, when I say that I pledge myself to satisfy the House, if necessary, of the authenticity of this letter.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I think the hon. Gentleman ought to be able to state how he got that letter.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: I am prepared to take the hon. and gallant Member's own word if he says he knows anything of the handwriting of the Knight of Kerry. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman were as well qualified as I am to judge of the handwriting he would at once admit the authenticity of the letter.

An hon. Member: To which Lord Lieutenant was it addressed?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: The letter was addressed to Lord Carlisle during the time he occupied the Office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and it is dated July the 5th, 1859. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Well, I said before I read the letter that it was addressed to Lord Carlisle. I did not attempt to deceive the House in any way, and now, Sir, here is another letter, and it is from a nobleman who is still alive, and who will be able to repudiate it if it be a forgery. I hope that statement will satisfy Her Majesty's Government and the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite. The date of this letter is 1855.—

> "Treasury, May 1st, 1855.
>
> "My Lord,—
>
> "I sit down to perform what is to me a very disagreeable task—namely, to ask you for a favour in the obtaining of which I am personally interested. My brother-in-law—Mr. Edward Croker—late a Captain in the 17th Lancers, is very anxious to obtain some employment which would increase his income. He is, unfortunately, not on good terms with his father, and, as he has nine children and very small means, at present his circumstances are very embarrassing. I understand there are now two vacancies in the office of Stipendiary Magistrate, and I think he would be very well qualified for such a position, as he has discharged the duties of a Justice of the Peace for many years past. If you can appoint him to one of the vacancies I think he would make a good public servant, and it would be a great obligation to me. Believe me to be your Excellency's very faithful servant,
>
> "Monck."

Hon. Gentlemen are mistaken, if they imagine for a moment that I am quoting these letters to the House under the impression that they all come from Tories. I do nothing of the kind, but the inference I ask the House to draw is this. That if these were applications made to a Liberal Lord Lieutenant with whom the great body of Irish landlords and land agents are not in political sympathy, what must have been the applications that were made on the other side?

Commander BETHELL (Yorkshire, E. R., Holderness): May I ask if the hon. Gentleman has read that letter with the consent of the writer?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: No, Sir; nor do the Resident Magistrates, when imprisoning us in Ireland, ever trouble themselves about getting our consent. The next letter I propose to read is another letter from the Knight of Kerry, addressed, not to the Lord Lieutenant, but to the Chief Secretary—"My Dear Sir,"—

An hon. Member: What is the date?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: It is dated the 19th of January, 1860.

> "My Dear Sir,—
>
> "His Excellency was kind enough to promise to bear in mind my brother's application for the situation of Stipendiary Magistrate."—

I see that this refers to the previous case; therefore, it is not necessary that I should read it. [*Cries of* "Read!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Certainly, if hon. Members opposite desire that I should do so; but they need not suppose that I abstained from doing so because this letter is likely to tell against me. Without further preface I will read the whole of the letter:—

"Valentia, 19th January, 1860.

"My Dear Sir,—

"His Excellency was kind enough to promise to bear in mind my brother's application for the situation of Stipendiary Magistrate, which Lord Castlerosse"—

Lord Castlerosse is the present Earl of Kenmare

—"and Colonel Herbert both promised to further. I have been informed that there are likely shortly to be three vacancies. I know how beset His Excellency must be, but still will venture to ask you, at a proper moment, to remind him of my brother's application.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,
"Yours very truly,
"P. Fitzgerald,
"Knight of Kerry."

May I add that this reminder of the application proved successful, and that the Knight of Kerry's brother obtained the appointment. And now, Sir, I come to a most extraordinary application. It is the case of a gentleman who seems to have been recommended by no less a personage than the King of the Belgians. It is dated "Castle Connell, County Limerick, 16th of April, 1863," and it says—

"May it please your Excellency to pardon the liberty I take in addressing you on the following subject. In January last I was informed by Viscount Conway that His Majesty the King of the Belgians had applied to Sir Robert Peel to give me the appointment of Resident Magistrate, in lieu of the appointment I now hold in the Constabulary. Knowing that there are now three vacancies, and that there will be two more immediately—"

Probably some friend was going to resign to make a vacancy for him; for I have other letters which show that an arrangement had been made between the outgoing and incoming men. A pure cut-and-dried arrangement. The letter goes on to say—

"Knowing that there are now three vacancies, and that there will be two more immediately, I wrote to Sir Robert Peel, and this day received his reply—namely, 'That the appointment of Resident Magistrate rests with the Lord Lieutenant, to whom you should accordingly apply.' His Majesty, who got the Constabulary cadetship for me eleven years ago, considered that the Chief Secretary was the person to apply to again now. Under the circumstances of His Majesty's present delicate state of health, may I beg of your Excellency to consider his application on my behalf. Being so low down on the list I should be over age before I could expect Sir H. J. Brownrigg to consider me. An increase of salary would be to me a great boon, having a young family to educate.

"I have the honour to be,
"Your Excellency's
"Most obedient humble servant,
"R. K. Fulton.
"S. I. Constabulary."

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Will the hon. Gentleman inform the House how and where he got these letters?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: I can only attribute the question of the hon. Member to the well-known character he bears in this House for innocence and simplicity. However, I would go far to satisfy the curiosity of the hon. Gentleman. I bought the letters at an auction; letters of that class are so common in Ireland that they may be had at auctions all over Dublin. There is, however, one thing I can promise hon. Gentlemen opposite, and it is that they will not find many documents of the kind after any Members of the present Irish Party. The next letter I desire to read is dated January 23rd, 1861. It is a a letter recommending the appointment as stipendiary magistrate of a Gentleman — Colonel Forbes — who still, I believe, occupies that position. The letter is as follows:—

"62, Great King Street, Edinburgh,
"January 23.

"My Dear Sir,—May I venture to introduce to you my cousin, Major Forbes, late of the 3rd Light Dragoons, a very distinguished officer at Sobraon? His military testimonials will speak for themselves. He is a candidate for one of two Stipendiary Magistracies in Ireland, where his brother, Colonel Forbes, has recently purchased property in County Galway—"

The purchase of property, therefore, appears to be another qualification. The letter goes on to say—

"Their father commanded the 56th Foot. They are all Roman Catholics, but mostly gentlemanly and popular men. Major Forbes has been for some time resident in Edinburgh.

"Yours faithfully,
"J. I. Hodson, D.D.,
"Merton College, Oxon."

Colonel KING-HARMAN: Is that the gentleman who is still a Stipendiary Magistrate?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: I believe so.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: Colonel Forbes was never in the 3rd Dragoons, and never had a brother who purchased property in Ireland.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: I can only attribute the impatience of the hon. and gallant Member to the fact that he is afraid some letters of his own may come out.

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I have not the least fear of that.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: However, I am quite willing to set the hon. and gallant Gentleman's mind at rest, for I have no letter of his at present. The next letter I propose to read is one dated October 10, 1861, written from Wexford by a gentleman who was formerly a Member of this House to the Under Secretary of State of the day—

"My Dear Sir,
I have been asked by Dr. Crean of this town to solicit your good offices in behalf of Mr. Thomas Wyse, Sub-Inspector of Constabulary, who is a candidate for the situation of Stipendiary Magistrate. He is cousin of our Ambassador at Athens, who has already solicited the situation from his Excellency. I am ashamed to be boring you this way;"

which certainly shows frequent applications—

"but I really cannot refuse without making enemies, and all I ask is that you will drop me a line saying a kind word about the matter, as Crean is an influential man here; and it is well to conciliate him.

"I am, my Dear Sir,
"Yours very faithfully,
"John Greene."
"John Hatchell, Esq., &c., &c., &c."

I did not intend to read this correspondence at such length, and I should not have done so if I had not been invited by hon. Members opposite to do so. I shall not read many more. The next letter is a letter from the Marquess of Donegall—

"Harefield Park, Uxbridge,
"March 13, 1855.

"My Dear Lord,
"First let me offer you my sincere and heartfelt congratulation on your appointment of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and then let me beg of you, if you should have it in your power, to appoint a cousin of mine—Captain William Verner, of Windsor, near Belfast"—

I daresay the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Johnston) will know him.

Mr. JOHNSTON; No; I cannot say that I do.

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: The letter goes on—

"to some place or other that may happen to fall into your gift—such as Stipendiary Magistrate. He is well qualified for anything—was a long time on the bench in New South Wales, and is a Magistrate for the County of Antrim. Added to all this he has a very large family; and is very poor;"

that is another of the same kind of qualification, you see—

"and, therefore, if you can do anything for him, you will most truly oblige,
"Yours very truly sincerely,
"Donegall.
"The Earl of Carlisle, K.G., &c., &c."

Colonel KING-HARMAN: What is the date?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: March, 1855. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I can well understand the impatience of hon. Members opposite. I can well understand that this subject is exceedingly distasteful to them. But in connection with the subject under discussion it is not a waste of the time of the House. I have no desire to waste that time; but having regard to the fact that you are placing the liberties of Ireland at the mercy of men of this description, I think I have a perfect right to read to the House some evidence of the character of these men. I maintain further that if any hon. Member is justified in doing so it is I, seeing that I have suffered imprisonment and have been condemned to the plank bed, and was clad in prison uniform by two officials of this very class, specially selected for the duty, and for the utterance of words so inoffensive that the Chief Secretary was ashamed to read them to the House. The words which I used were these—that as Secretary to the National League, I appealed to the farmers in the constituency, which afterwards returned me to this House, to give a just and fair consideration to the claims of the labourers; and that, if they did not, they would find that the agitation used in that behalf might be turned against themselves for the benefit of the labouring classes. Those are the very words I used. They were marked in a report sent up by the Resident Magistrates to Dublin Castle to know if they were sufficiently strong to justify a prosecution against me. They were returned by the Chief Secretary with the words I have quoted bracketted and marked with a blue pencil. These magistrates, having received this intimation, and knowing that their promotion depended on the will of Dublin Castle, were hardly likely to refuse to do what they did—namely, to send me to gaol. Now, Sir, I have referred to the character of the general intimidation which was complained of by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in his speech; and I want to show how very misleading are the few figures in the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman has given us the number of persons who have been Boycotted, and I wish to explain to the House how these statistics have been got up. In a district in Ireland where evictions have been carried on, if an emergency man wishes to procure goods, he is not taken to the house of a Conservative or Protestant shopkeeper in order to obtain them, because it is very well known that he would get them without difficulty, and in every town in the South of Ireland there are Protestant and Conservative shopkeepers, who are generally the most successful and wealthy merchants in the town—such is the toleration of Catholics, who do not practise anything in the nature of exclusive dealing upon religious or political grounds as others do. But instead of bringing persons who may have incurred popular disfavour in such localities into the shops where it is well known that they would be supplied, they are marched into the shop of the local president or secretary of the National League, and if the shopkeeper refuses to supply them, because they are emergency men or caretakers of evicted farms, the case is at once set down as a case of Boycotting. There is no difficulty whatever in procuring an ample supply of food from those with whom they are in political sympathy. [Colonel KING-HARMAN expressed dissent.] I will challenge the hon. and gallant Gentleman to name a single village in Ireland where this cannot be done. Day after day we see cases recorded in the local newspapers where the police have marched men into houses where they knew they would not get the supplies for which they asked, and where they were perfectly aware they would be Boycotted. Now, Sir, the second difficulty complained of by the Chief Secretary in his speech was the difficulty of procuring evidence. But, I would ask, what provision is there in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman to facilitate the procuring of evidence? Is there any provision in the Bill, as stated by the right hon. Gentleman to the House, which will make it more easy for the Crown in Ireland to get evidence in criminal cases or to procure the assistance of the people in carrying out the law? Does he think, if he transfers the venue, say from Kerry to Belfast, that the Crown witnesses who go down to Belfast to prosecute would be more popular in that locality than by giving evidence at a trial in their own locality? Does he think a Crown witness will be more likely to be popular in Ireland, and that the people will be more likely to fraternize with him because he comes over here at the instance of the Chief Secretary to hang or send to penal servitude a fellow-countryman? Or is it meant that juries and magistrates shall act without any evidence at all? The statement of the right hon. Gentleman may or may not be true; but, at all events, it is patent that the Bill makes no provision whatever which will enable him to get over the difficulty of procuring evidence, and nothing this House can devise will render the position of a Crown witness, or the office of Crown prosecutor, more popular in Ireland, until they are employed in carrying out laws which the people sanction and respect. The third difficulty of the right hon. Gentleman was the failure of juries to convict. Now, I am not going to deny that there have been cases in Ireland where, in the teeth of evidence tolerably clear, the jury have either disagreed or refused to convict. But is there no instance the other way? Have there been no cases, and have none been brought under the attention of the House in recent years in Ireland, where juries, instead of refusing to convict, have convicted on evidence absolutely false or insufficient; have there been no cases in which juries have, in the jury-box, given way to their political feeling, and have consigned to penal servitude, and in some cases to the gallows, men who are now admitted to have been innocent?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Who are they?

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: Who are they? I will appeal to hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, who gave eloquent support to a Motion which I made in one of these cases a few years ago. I appeal to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), and to the present Solicitor General for England (Sir Edward Clarke), who made admirable speeches in support of my Motion on that occasion. Before this House proceeds to legislate in the direction of doing away with trial by jury, let me ask hon. Members to consider first whether trial by jury has not had a fair chance in Ireland; and if it has not, is the blame of the failure attributable wholly to the people and none of it attributable to the Crown? Last night we had upon this subject an able and eloquent and very remarkable speech from the right hon. Gentleman who was a former Chief Secretary and the late Secretary for War (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman). He described the system of trial by jury in Ireland as a system by which the people look upon the Crown as doing everything, fair or unfair, to carry out their object, and the people naturally did everything they could to defeat the Crown. Have we not had our attention drawn, night after night, to the infamous manner in which jury-packing is carried on in Ireland? We have been told times out of number that Catholics are persistently challenged on every trial by jury in Ireland. It may be desirable to obtain convictions; but one conviction, or two convictions, or 100 convictions, are not so important as the impartial administration of the law in a manner calculated to command the sympathy and respect of the people; and I warn the House that no Government will succeed in winning the respect of the people of that country for the administration of the law unless you convince them that it is their duty and their right to take part in its administration. The Chief Secretary stated in his speech that it was well known, by any person acquainted with the country, that before a juryman entered the box in agrarian trials in Ireland, how he would cast his verdict. Now, I would like to ask the House how that matter has become so well known? It is a practice condemned on the part of the people, and I admit that it is a practice which ought to be condemned. But surely it is equally blamable when practised for the Crown. What takes place in ordinary cases tried at Criminal Assizes in Ireland? I will take a case that was tried recently in Cork. There were several agrarian cases tried there; and this singular fact occurred, that while the first jury who tried a case of that kind disagreed, the juries who tried the cases at the end of the Assizes, in almost every instance, whether rightly or wrongly, and whether the accused was guilty or not, found a verdict of guilty. What was the reason? It was this—that the prosecuting Crown Solicitor who had charge of the trial, the moment the first jury were discharged, on account of want of agreement, went out among the jurors to find out what was the state of the mind of the jury. He canvassed the jurymen themselves, ascertained how many were for an acquittal, and how many for a conviction, and when these prisoners, or others, were put again on their trial, in an infamous and shameful manner he selected only those jurors who had been in favour of a conviction, and carefully excluded those who had been in favour of an acquittal in the earlier trial. Now, I challenge the Law Officers of the Crown to stand up and deny that that has been the persistent practice of the Crown Prosecutors in Ireland. Almost invariably the Crown Solicitor goes out to a jury who have disagreed, and ascertains in this way the state of their mind. How can you expect the people of Ireland to respect any law so shamefully and infamously administered as that? If you want the people of Ireland to respect your laws you must set them a good example. Surely it is better for the Crown and better for the country that a few criminals should escape, even if guilty, than that you should set every man in Ireland root and branch against your system of administering justice. There recently appeared in an Irish newspaper a remarkable letter from a Roman Catholic Bishop—the Bishop of Achonry upon this subject of jury-packing. I will read one paragraph in the letter which refers to certain cases recently tried at Sligo. The jurors selected were "nailers," the prisoners were convicted; but the opinion of all but furious partizans of the so-called Party of Order was thus expressed by the Catholic Bishop of Achonry—

> "A Woodford Catholic prisoner in Sligo dock sees all his co-religionist jurors set aside by the Crown, and twelve non-Catholics called to try him—I say 'try,' when the word 'convict' is the one; but let that pass — The prisoner's counsel very properly resents the action of the Crown, remarking that the conduct of the Crown was equivalent to branding every rejected Papist as a perjurer. Now, how could that poor Papist prisoner have any confidence in the administration of the forms of the law, when he sees these things occur in the name of the Crown?"

That is a weighty declaration; but anyone who possesses the slightest knowledge of Ireland knows that it is true, and that it lies at the root of the whole system of the failure of trial by jury. It was the Crown which had set the example of not respecting the administration of the law; and when the Crown did that, how was it possible for them to expect the respect and sympathy of the Irish people to the law? I have to complain that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in his speech, and others who have risen on that side of the House, have resorted to the unfair and very unjustifiable course of attributing every difficulty, every crime, and every disorder in Ireland, to the influence of the National League. Let me ask this question. Was there never a crime committed in Ireland, and was no exceptional legislation for that country ever asked for, before the National League was established? Is it not patent to everybody that year after year the Government have had to come to this House for special powers to enable them to deal with exceptional agrarian crime in Ireland? Is it not shameful and unfair that because there is a public organization in the country endeavouring to shield the people from the oppression of an iniquitous class—is it not unfair and dishonest that everything in the nature of crime and disorder which may occur in that country is attributed to that organization? Has the Chief Secretary brought forward one instance where an officer of the National League has been brought to justice or punished, or even charged with any one of these crimes? If this great organization in Ireland is exercising its influence in the way the right hon. Gentleman has attributed to it, then what have the Executive been doing in Ireland, with all their police, during the period the National League has been in existence, seeing that they have not been able to charge against one single officer of the National League any one of these offences? I maintain that this species of argument is most unfair and dishonest, and I do so because I believe that behind this appeal of the right hon Gentleman for the suppression of the National League, there exists some other motive and influence besides that of a desire to deal with disorder and crime. The Government know that, in addition to looking after the interests of the tenant farmers in Ireland, the National League has devoted a large amount of time and has expended a large sum of money in looking after the Parliamentary Registration in Ireland. That is the real secret. That fact, whatever may be said of the agrarian difficulty in Ireland, explains the desire of some hon. Members from the North of Ireland, whose constituencies are exceedingly doubtful and shaky, to bring out the suppression of the League, because they know that the National League will suppress them out of this House very shortly. [*Cries of* "Oh!" and "Question!"] Considering the manner in which all sorts of crimes have been attributed to the National League, I think I am entitled to say a few words in its defence. First of all, I invite the attention of the House to the fact that the National League was established in October, 1882, when the Crimes Act, administered by Earl Spencer, was in full swing in Ireland. The National League grew up under that Act; the laws were as strong as any Government could ask for, and when they were passed in this House the two political Parties in this country insisted upon making them as severe and stringent as was possible. Notwithstanding that fact, the National League grew up under the administration of Lord Spencer. For a period of five years I have been in charge of the organization of the National League, and I assert it is false to say that any effort has ever been made to force the National League on the people of the country. For the manner in which the National League was established and organized, my hon. Colleagues will tell you that I am altogether responsible. They gave me a very free hand in regard to its direction and management. Every letter that left the office has been signed with my name, and all communications coming there read by me; and so far from the National League having been forced upon the country, there has not been a single organizer sent out to establish a branch. I declined to do so, and insisted that only such branches should be received as were got up by the localities themselves and applied for affiliation with us. Of course, when an application was made to us for copies of our rules and cards of membership we were willing to supply them; but we never went so far as the organizers of most political movements in sending organizers throughout the country to establish branches. Here is the address which was put forward to the people of Ireland at the time the National League was established, and it is signed by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), the hon. Member for Cavan (Mr. Biggar), the hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy), myself, and about 30 other gentlemen, some of whom occupy a prominent and leading position in mercantile life in Dublin. The address says—

> "Fellow Countrymen,—As the Organizing Committee entrusted to the National Conference with the preliminary arrangements for the organization of the Irish National League, we have the honour of submitting to you the accompanying rules for the formation and guidance of branches. It is desirable that no time shall be wasted in putting the resolutions of the Conference in force. The necessity of close organization, for the purpose of concentrating and giving a definite direction to the national energies, is universally felt. It has been forced upon public attention by the encroachments upon popular rights, which have been going on in all directions since the power of union among the people was relaxed. The landlord combination for the purpose of breaking the spirit of the Irish tenant, the dismay which the present scale of judicial rents has created among applicants to the Land Courts, and the confiscation of tenants' property that is being effected wherever disorganization has crept in, render it more necessary now than ever that the Irish tenantry should be re-united in vigilant and lawful association, for the purpose of protecting themselves from injustice, and for seeking that full measure of land law reform which alone can secure them against the perils of halting legislation. From the farming classes the desire for organized effort has extended to the labourers, whose miserable condition has been so long disregarded, and to the artizans, who see in the spirit evoked by a great national combination, a power which can nourish our decaying industries with millions of money, now annually drained away into foreign markets. With all these incentives to organization, the Irish National League unites a programme of social and political reform, which will gradually transfer all local power and patronage from privileged strangers into the hands of the people, and so fortify them for the work of National Self-government, which is the aspiration of all our struggles."

Those words have not been written since the introduction of the Home Rule Bill of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian; they were written years before the mass of the Liberal Party gave their sanction to Home Rule, and I invite the attention of hon. Members to the fact that the Irish National League placed this object in the forefront of their programme—

> "And so fortify them for the work of National Self-government which is the inspiration of all our struggles. The National Conference has with the most hearty unanimity embodied these principles in the programme of the Irish National League. It remains for you now, in your various districts, to give immediate and practical effect to these resolutions, so that from the formation of local branches, the League may be able to proceed to the election for the Central Council, and may be able to offer to every section of the Irish people, the power and protection which organization and discipline alone can ensure."

The people of Ireland did take up that appeal, and let me assure the House that the organization of the National League is not confined to the so-called disaffected districts. In the Province of Ulster there are the following branches:—Antrim, 18; Armagh, 20; Cavan, 46; Donegal, 51; Down, 38; Fermanagh, 30; Derry, 23; Monaghan, 27; and Tyrone, 56; making 309 for the entire Province of Ulster. In Munster there are 473—namely, Clare, 64; Cork, 119; Kerry, 61; Limerick, 92; Tipperary, 97; and Waterford, 40. In the Province of Leinster there are 420—namely, Carlow, 16; Dublin, 52; King's County, 30; Kilkenny, 45; Kildare, 28; Louth, 37; Longford, 26; Meath, 44; Queen's County, 31; Westmeath, 40; Wicklow, 22; and Wexford, 49. In Connaught there are 311 branches, composed as follows:—Galway, 105; Leitrim, 33; Mayo, 71; Roscommon, 57; and Sligo, 45; making a total of 1,513 branches for the whole of Ireland. If that organization of the National League is so criminal now, it must have been criminal a year or two ago.

Mr. SINCLAIR, (Falkirk, &c.): Will the hon. Gentleman say what the total income of these branches is?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: The total annual income from all the branches to our Central Executive is about £11,000.

Captain COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): May I ask how much of that is American money?

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON: I have been speaking of the total income of the League from its own resources. Since its establishment the National League has not used £4,000 of American money. That, I think, shows the value of the information which hon. Gentlemen opposite have in regard to the National League. Twenty-five per cent of the funds of the League are retained by the branches for political purposes and working expenses in their own various localities. Without pressure from us, or any endeavour on our part to force their hands, we have received from them 75 per cent of their funds. That 75 per cent is applied, first of all to pressing requirements where most needed on behalf of tenants who have been unjustly evicted. Hon. Members on the other side of the House, as well as upon this, know perfectly well that before we take up the cases of these tenants and consider them we make the most minute and careful inquiry, and that the tenant who has allowed himself, by his own recklessness and want of thrift, to fall into arrears with his landlord, never receives assistance from us. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite laugh. I do not wish to appeal to hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House. I know that the present debate is exceedingly inconvenient and unsatisfactory to them; but this I will say, that there are hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House who are going to vote for the Bill of the Chief Secretary who have themselves found their way more than once to the offices of the National League.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: Name one of them.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: I will not be tempted to "Name!" Their interviews with me were not strictly a matter of confidence; but I think I am bound to respect them. But this I will pledge myself to—that some of those who are now going to vote for this Bill did, at the time the Conservative Party were coquetting with Home Rule, had interviews with me, and they gave me some very valuable suggestions as to the best manner of putting the Home Rule question before the people of England. There is another fact in regard to the policy of the National League to which I wish to draw the attention of the House. We have deemed it necessary to make a vigorous endeavour on our part to stamp out crime in different parts of the country. The National League has repeatedly refused to give grants to an unfortunate evicted tenant whose case in every other respect deserved consideration, solely because he lived in a district where disturbance was rife, and because we believed that the giving of assistance in such a locality where a tenant had been evicted might appear, in the eyes of a misguided people, to have some semblance of encouragement to crime and outrage. Besides that, I am reminded, by my hon. Friends behind me, that the executive of the National League have persistently and deliberately refused, on many occasions, to take money, or allow branches to be formed, and to take them into affiliation, because the demand came from localities where crime and outrage were prevalent. I will go further, and I will appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite who know anything of Ireland to point out a single instance where one of the branches has taken what might be considered a wrong step in regard to Boycotting, or an outrage of any kind, or anything that might have a tendency to it, where we have not used our exertions and have got that branch suppressed. We have on all occasions, where our attention has been called to action of that kind, suppressed the branch of which there could be the least shadow of a suspicion. I fear that I have troubled the House too long, and I will, therefore, conclude by asking the House seriously to reflect on the character of the step they are taking in passing this Bill. I also ask them to consider the view which the Irish people will take of it. During the discussion of the Home Rule Question we had very encouraging speeches from hon. Gentlemen opposite who then sat on these (the Opposition) Benches. Indeed, we had a chorus of lamentation from hon. Gentlemen at the state of Ireland. They told us that coercion had been carried far enough, and nothing was more common than to hear from them the expression that Ireland had been ruined and brought to demand Home Rule because the country had been made the shibboleth of political Parties in this House. I ask hon. Gentlemen what are they by their vote going to make of Ireland now? What is the motive of the policy which the Government are now introducing in regard to the people of Ireland? What they are doing with our unfortunate country is nothing else than making it the shibboleth of faction and party. Have they established any reason or justification for the policy they are attempting to carry out? If they have done so now I would ask if the case was not infinitely stronger before, when they refused to enter upon the policy they are now deliberately pursuing. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has spoken of the responsibility which is incurred by hon. and right hon. Members opposite. The unfortunate people of Ireland are close observers of the proceedings and events which take place in this House, and they cannot forget the speeches of Conservative Members when they were in opposition deploring the manner in which our country has been made the shuttlecock of Parties, nor will they forget that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who refused to go with his own Party one step in the direction of passing a Home Rule Bill, born of confidence in the people of Ireland, because he disagreed with some of its provisions; and who is going now in precisely similar circumstances wholly and heartily in for a Bill which is intended to have, and must have, the effect of scourging and irritating the people of Ireland.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I think that even the most prejudiced listener in this House will think that the speech we have just listened to has been marked with incidents of no ordinary occurrence, and by the announcement of transactions which cannot reflect great credit on the parties whose letters have been read and upon the system to which those letters bear reference; and I think further, that the evidence which has been given by my hon. Friend the Member for Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington) of the character and origin of the method and working of the institution known as the National League ought to carry some weight, at any rate, to unprejudiced minds, and show the absolute falsity of the calumnies which have been urged against it. Some of those who are going to vote against the liberties of Ireland ought to see that their conclusions are founded upon totally wrong premisses, and that they should pause before they take a step which they can never retrace. But there was one further piece of evidence in the speech of the hon. Member for Dublin to which I wish to refer. My hon. Friend spoke of the fact that there are hon. Members sitting on the opposite side of the House, who, when their Party was coquetting with Home Rule in 1885, did not disdain to fall back on the National League in order to get information from its office in Dublin, and virtually thus to make themselves accomplices of the League. My hon. Friend, as he told us, respected their confidence; but we have a right to challenge those hon. Members to declare themselves. I speak, Sir, to-night, as a member of the National League, and not only that, but as a member of the Democratic party in this country, and as the freely chosen Representative of a constituency which has recorded its unfaltering determination to oppose tooth and nail—both inside and outside this House, by every legitimate means that may offer—any retrograde step in the direction of coercion such as the Government is now trying to force upon the country. I desire to refer to some of the statements made by the Chief Secretary for Ireland in the course of this debate; and I should like to remark upon the lugubrious predictions which he and his Party are in the habit of making in reference to the action of the Irish people. I should like to know by what title the Party opposite claim to speak for all eternity on behalf of Members of this House and those who come after us. We are told by hon. Gentlemen opposite that, whatever the character of their Bill may be, it is no worse, at any rate, than the measures which have been put forward in times past by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House. There are two answers to that statement—first of all that the condition of Ireland is very different from what it was in the past; so different that they do not venture to rely on statistics in support of their flimsy allegations in justification of their measure. If hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House have learnt by experience the folly of their past ways, it is, at any rate, to their credit that they should have done so. They have learned something by the mistakes of former years. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen who sit opposite are, by some mental infirmity, I must assume, incapable of learning wisdom either from their own faults or from the mistakes of others. [*Interruption.*] I believe half-past 12 o'clock is generally admitted to be the time at which it will be most convenient to adjourn our debates, and there are still a few minutes during which I may be permitted to continue. Almost the only reason which has been advanced on behalf of this Bill is that the Jury system in Ireland is unworkable and, therefore, without inquiring into the reasons why it is unworkable, the Government unblushingly say that we must abolish it root and branch. I think that in answer to their plea that they cannot work the jury system, and that we must abolish it, we have a right to go somewhat narrowly and critically into the causes of its unworkability, admitting for the sake of argument that it is unworkable. And, I think it is right to point out that it is owing mainly to their own action that it is as they say in an unworkable condition in Ireland. And why? Is it not a fact which cannot be denied, because your own officials have admitted it, that you have prostituted the sacred name of justice by packing juries in order to secure men devoted to your own interest and purpose? This is the principal cause of the breakdown of the jury system in Ireland. Again, the meaning of Jury Trial is that you draw a sample as it were from the bulk of the people, and when you find that it does not suit your purpose it is clear that there is something radically wrong in your system. It was the same in the early part of the century when English juries revolted against the unfairness of English law, and over and over again refused to convict men charged with stealing and other offences, because they knew that the prisoners under the Draconian laws of the time would be hanged; they preferred to allow criminals to go free rather than themselves commit the greater crime of hanging them. I ask hon. Gentlemen to consider what was the remedy then applied in our country. It was the humane, salutary and statesman-like policy of Romilly and other great reformers which brought about that changed condition in the minds of the people, that reverence on the part of the people for the law which has established the system of trial by jury in this country upon a foundation which cannot be shaken. This is what we ask shall be done in Ireland. If you will only pursue a policy of humanity and conciliation, and as I would say of common sense, and not go back from the pledges which you yourselves have in many cases given to your constituents, the same result would follow in Ireland; but do not think to return to those hated paths of coercion to which you know that the hearts of the people of this country are now firmly opposed, and which the leaders of the people of the country will not allow to continue. You know that your case is so weak that you dare not face your constituents. Just as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) knows that he cannot with success address a free public meeting in the country, and that throughout the length and breadth of England, wherever he may go he will be hooted at every meeting that is not a hole-and-corner meeting; so the Leaders of the Conservative Party know perfectly well that a fortnight's Recess now would mean a fortnight's agitation such as has not been witnessed in the country for some years, and so they dare not trust their supporters out of their sight lest they should find out the true feeling of the country with regard to the policy of coercion to which they are going to commit themselves. I can tell the Government that the agitation is commencing, and that they are likely to raise a flame which all their coercion will not be able to put out.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. T. P. O'Connor.*)

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Sir, I would not for a moment press any claim of my own to occupy the time of the House, except by the free permission of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury; but as he has accorded me that free permission, I wish to say very briefly why I think Her Majesty's Government should be inclined to accept the Motion which has been made by the hon. Member who has just sat down. [*Loud cries of* "No, no!"] I take note of those negatives, but I wish to state what I believe to be strong reasons in support of it. We have had two questions brought before us to-night—one with respect to the interval between the first and second reading, the other with respect to the termination of the present debate. With regard to the interval between the introduction of the Bill and its second reading, I do not wish to enter into any detail. But if I do not refer to what has been said by the right hon. Gentleman to-night, I must beg him not to consider my silence as an indication of my acceptance of the proposal he has made. I do not think it would be well to enter upon arguments on that point at this moment. But it would, in my judgment, be better that the question of the termination of the debate should be determined upon its own merits. How does the case stand? I request the House to go back with me to what happened at the commencement of the evening. The hon. Member for

Cork (Mr. Parnell) moved an Amendment of the greatest importance. It was truly observed by the right hon. Gentleman last night that the introduction of such an Amendment at so late a stage was unusual and inconvenient. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman, and I understand that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork agrees with him, that it was both the one and the other. But the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork pointed out with, I think, absolutely conclusive force, that he had not been able to move his Amendment—[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]—at any earlier stage, because the materials necessary to his argument were not in his possession. ["Oh, oh!"] That is strictly and absolutely true. I say it without hesitation and without offence. The Chief Secretary for Ireland referred to the Land Bill of the Government; but in his speech in this debate he conveyed no clear and substantial idea of what the Land Bill is which constitutes the most important and difficult part of the case. I listened to the right hon. Gentleman. He assents to what I say, and I am glad of that, because I own that, as to the most important part of the case, except with regard to his objection to breaking the 15 years' contract, it was impossible to gather any idea from the few words used by the right hon. Gentleman. It appears to me that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork, under the circumstances, having to propose an Amendment which invited the House to consider the whole state of Ireland, was bound to move that Amendment, having in his possession a view of the entire policy of the Government, so far as it is now proposed. Therefore, he appears to me not open to the smallest blame for the unusual and inconvenient course he was bound to pursue, for if there was anything unusual and inconvenient, it was entirely due to the circumstances in which he was placed by Her Majesty's Government. Many Gentlemen opposite listened to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork. I do not wish to use any disrespectful expression; but having known the introduction of many Bills for the restraint of Constitutional liberty in Ireland, and having listened over and over again to the opposition to those Bills, I must say I have never known an instance in which the case for the Government was so completely torn to rags as was to-night the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary by the analysis of the hon. Member for Cork. You complain of the length of this debate; but how is it possible for the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork to make adequate examination of the anonymous anecdotes of the Judges' charges, jury cases, and Boycotting allegations, without time to communicate with Ireland, in respect of which I must say I am rather surprised that he has been able to do so much in so short a time? [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] I presume that hon. Gentlemen opposite could do a great deal more without any inquiry at all. But I speak of men who have to examine closely and argue seriously. I contend that the case which the hon. Member for Cork has brought forward at the earliest moment is most serious and grave, and now the demand is made on behalf of Ireland by a well-known Member for the devotion of another night to the discussion of this Amendment and the consideration of the case against the Government, and particularly against the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I must own that, in my view, this is a reasonable demand, and I believe, moreover, that in stating that it is a reasonable demand I am stating the opinion which largely and generally prevails upon this side of the House. It certainly appears in conformity with precedent. The Government are starting on a new course in applying extreme pressure to the House in attempting to hurry proceedings of this kind. ["Oh!"] I am not aware that it has been the practice to hurry these proceedings against the judgment either of the Irish Members or of large portions of the House on former occasions. I am not aware that it is necessary for me to go into all the precedents now. They will probably have to be discussed hereafter. We will not go over the precedent of 1881 further than to say that again the gentleman—whoever he may be—who supplies the right hon. Member with information, supplies him with most inadequate information, leaving out all the most material facts. Sir Robert

Peel, in 1846, brought in a Bill which, if I remember aright, contained, even in the title of the Bill, far graver allegations than any now made in justification of the present measure. It was a Bill, I think, for the repression of murder or assassination. It was brought forward under some such title as that. At the same time that Sir Robert Peel brought forward that measure, he had in his hands a Bill to which he attached inestimable and supreme and superlative importance—namely, a Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws—a Bill on which, even at that period, the peace of the country depended; and I remember well how earnestly he strove to keep aside from the deliberations of Parliament that year everything that could interfere with the progress of the Corn Law Bill. But, notwithstanding that, what was the view taken by him of the nature of the Coercion Bill for Ireland, and what the moral difficulty of interposing by the pressure of a majority to stop its full and free discussion? In 1846 the first reading of that Bill was moved on the 30th of March, and it was not obtained until the 1st of May. That, Sir, was in a Parliament in which the Tory Party had a very large majority, and in which, as I have said, between four and five weeks interposed between the proposal of the first reading and the carrying of it. I suppose that this Motion for Adjournment, though it is made by an English Member in the strict sense of the word, is made on the part of Irish friends and coadjutors, and that it conveys the demands which they think it their duty respectfully to lay before the House. I must say that I shall not be a party to refusing that demand. I warn the right hon. Gentleman—[*Signs of dissent*]—well, I will not use that expression; I respectfully request him to observe that, so far as I am aware, this description of pressure has not been used on former occasions. I could show that, I think, by going into previous cases in detail. It is a dangerous pressure to use, and although I do not wish to employ any phrase or language which could in any degree introduce heat into the discussion, having stated strongly and firmly the opinion which prevails on this side of the House, I desire, on broader grounds, to refer to principles hitherto held applicable to measures of this class, and respectfully ask the right hon. Gentleman to give a favourable consideration to the Motion now before the House.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) Strand, Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with the respect which is due to the authority of the right hon. Gentleman to the appeal which he has made to me, and I have also listened to the arguments which he has addressed to the House in support of that appeal. I cannot say that I was greatly influenced by the last precedent on which he relied—that of Sir Robert Peel, in 1846. It appears to me, Sir, that if Sir Robert Peel was of opinion that the condition of Ireland was so grave and so serious as to make it necessary to ask Parliament for extraordinary powers, it was certainly his duty to have pressed earlier for those powers than he did. I am perfectly aware of the result of that appeal and of the consequences that followed next year. The hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) has moved the adjournment of the debate. If he had risen at any time during the five days of this debate I am sure the House would have listened to him. I am not aware that he has done so. But the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition laid stress on the fact that the hon. Member for Cork had had no opportunity of raising the debate which he has initiated until to-night, in consequence of the absence of information on which he desired to rest his case. Well, Sir, I listened to the very able speech of the hon. Member, and with the exception of the first few passages it appeared to me that the speech was devoted to criticism of the speech of my right hon. Friend on my left (the Chief Secretary for Ireland) and to the Motion for leave to bring in this Bill, rather than to the general question of the condition of Ireland. I have listened also to the speeches that have been made this evening on the other side of the House, and they also have been directed to the Motion rather than to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork. I am sure it will be felt by the House and by the country that this preliminary debate has lasted long enough, and if the right hon. Gentleman had been in his place when my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary answered the speech of the hon. Member——

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I was in the House.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Then, if that was so I can only say that my impression of the speech of my right hon. Friend was that it gave a most complete answer to that of the hon. Member for Cork. The views of the hon. Member, to which the right hon. Gentleman attaches so much importance, will have their weight with the House and the country, and, therefore, he will have the full advantage of the effect produced by the speech in the Division, which I hope may now take place. Sir, we have a duty to discharge to the country, which expects Parliament to make progress with the Business of the country. I will not, in the slightest degree, underrate the gravity and importance of the demand the right hon. Gentleman makes on Parliament. We feel our responsibility as greatly as the right hon. Gentleman opposite can do—more, probably, than the right hon. Gentleman does. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes; probably more than he does, for we are responsible for the government of the country, and he is not. We are responsible for the safety of the lives, the liberty, and the property of the people of Ireland. We have placed before Parliament the measures we deem necessary to secure that safety and liberty, and, under these circumstances, I greatly regret that I cannot accede to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): I am afraid, Sir, that the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has not paid me a very great compliment in saying that only a few passages in the first part of my speech this evening were devoted to the subject on which we received information for the first time last night. I certainly intended that the whole of my speech should hang upon and be connected with that information. And it was my desire, in the preparation of my speech, to carry out that intention, and I think I did so. However, be that as it may, I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit that he takes upon himself very considerable responsibility in adopting the unreasonable course which he now proposes to adopt of refusing to concede another night for the discussion of an Amendment of the character of that which is before the House. I may remind the right hon. Gentleman of the appeal which has been made by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, with his great experience of the traditions of this House. Many of my hon. Friends who are inclined to speak in this preliminary debate have so far waived their right of speaking in favour of the numerous English and Scotch Members who have desired to speak on one side of the House or the other. It is right that the voice of Great Britain should be heard, and heard effectually; and, even if none of us should be permitted to speak by the exigencies of the limits which the right hon. Gentleman appears to have felt it his duty to place upon the debate, we should not have grudged that surrender of our rights, since it enabled the noble demonstration to be given which has been afforded by so many Members for Great Britain during the last few days. But, Sir, the fact remains that such Members as the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton)—one of the Nationalist Ulster Members—and my hon. Friend who has moved the adjournment of the debate (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), have not been permitted to speak even upon the Motion for taking all the time of the House for this Bill, much less upon the Motion for the introduction of the Bill, or the Amendment we are now discussing. The right hon. Gentleman cannot reconcile that state of affairs coming upon a Coercion Bill—a Bill in which our liberties are so deeply involved—as being consistent with the declarations repeatedly made in the discussion of the Closure Rule. The right hon. Gentleman cannot say it is fair or in accordance with fair play, that so few Irish Members should be heard as have been heard even upon this preliminary Motion. He cannot say that any time has been wasted by any of the Irish Members or by any of the English Members. He must know full well by this time that the introduction of this Coercion Bill has stirred this House to its depths, and will stir this country to its depths. He must know that if he smothers debate to-night it will burst out some other night on some other stage. If he chokes off the discussion of this stage of the Bill by an unfair application of the Rule of Procedure, which he has obtained under distinct and oft-repeated pledges that it should be used only to stop irrelevant and undue discussion, and the flame is smothered to-night, it will break out again shortly. It is impossible in these days and with the advantages we live under, to ultimately choke down a case and stop discussion in this House. I think the right hon. Gentleman will see that the demand we make is not an unreasonable one. He cannot say, speaking in reference to the Irish Members, that they have occupied an undue portion of the time of the House. The Irish Members have not sustained their due share of this discussion. The time within which such Members as the hon. Member for West Belfast can speak, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, is very limited, being confined to periods of two or three hours at the beginning and at the close of the evening. It is not fair to expect such Members to speak during the dinner hour. ["Oh, oh!"] I think even young Tory Members will admit that it would not be reasonable to expect the hon. Member for West Belfast to speak on a Coercion Bill directed against Ireland during the dinner hour. The request we make is not an unreasonable one. It is an eminently reasonable one. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will show his ideas of fair play, and his willingness to keep his word to us, by acceding to the Motion which my hon. Friend has made.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): The hon. Member for Cork has just called attention to the extremely limited period of time within which it is possible for Members of importance to address the House. I think we might have expected, in these circumstances, that the hon. Member for Cork would have given some explanation of the action of himself and his Friends this afternoon, when by unanimously rising to support a Motion for the Adjournment of the House, they did everything that it was in their power to do to restrict that limited time before 8 o'clock within which important Members can speak. But before the House comes to a decision on the question of the adjournment, I think it would be desirable that we should call to mind the time which, during the present Session, has been devoted to what has practically been one discussion. The general discussion on the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne lasted four days. I will not say that the whole of those four days was devoted to the discussion of Irish questions, but a very considerable portion of those four days was so occupied. The hon. Member for Cork then moved an Amendment which practically raised the same issue as we have been debating during the last fortnight; it was to the effect that the remedy for the evils existing in Ireland was not to be found in increased stringency of the Criminal Law, but in legislation which would meet the wants and desires of the Irish people. That Amendment was practically an Amendment in favour of giving precedence to remedial over repressive legislation, and the whole of the debate of those five days really turned upon the same issue we are now debating. Well, now, five days were thus occupied. The question of Ireland was, I think, again discussed before the conclusion of the debate on the Address, and it frequently cropped up during the protracted debate upon the Closure Rule. Not taking into account the five days' general discussion upon the Address, we have now had five days' discussion on the Amendment to the Address proposed by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork, four days' discussion on the Motion for urgency, and five days' discussion upon the Motion for leave to introduce this Bill. We have thus already had, during the present Session, 14 days' debate upon what is really only a preliminary stage of the Bill—the introduction of the Bill. I think it is impossible, having regard to any precedent which my right hon. Friend (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) can produce from any period of Parliamentary history, to contend that such an amount of time has ever been given for the discussion of a merely preliminary question as has been given to the discussion of this. I object to the further indefinite prolongation of this debate. I object for reasons of what I think I may call a general Parliamentary character. It is not a practice to be encouraged that second reading speeches or Committee speeches should be made on the introduction of a Bill. Nearly all the speeches which have been made during the course of this debate have been of the character either of second reading speeches or of Committee speeches; and I think there can be very little doubt that if the debate is further protracted the speeches made hereafter will be of the same character. We are now asked to continue this discussion—continue it I do not know how much longer—for the purpose of discussing, concurrently with the proposal to increase the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland, the land legislation which has been proposed by the Government. Now, it appears to me that that would be a most inconvenient course to take. We cannot discuss the two subjects together. We should not be allowed by the Chair to make detailed references either to speeches made in "another place" or to a measure which is before the other House. We can only discuss the proposal of the Government relating to land in Ireland in a most partial and imperfect manner, and if we cannot discuss such a question as that in connection with the repressive legislation proposed by the Government it seems we should only lose time and create confusion by attempting to do so. There is no object in doing it. The Government have not professed that the land legislation which they bring forward will in their opinion create such a favourable impression upon the minds of the discontented and dissatisfied portion of the people of Ireland as to render the legislation we are now discussing unnecessary. [*Home Rule cheers.*] As I understand the matter, they have not proposed it with any sanguine hope it will give complete satisfaction, and, judging from the cheers of hon. Members below the Gangway, in that they are perfectly right. If we had heard from them to-night that the land legislation of the Government is so favourably received by them as to probably accomplish all that is required for the maintenance of law and order in Ireland, then there would have been good ground for asking that repressive legislation should be deferred until further progress had been made with the land legislation. But we have heard the land proposals of the Government described by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) as a stab in the back for the tenants of Ireland. Under these circumstances, there can be no object in prolonging this debate. The land proposals of the Government are absolutely and entirely distinct from those we are now considering; and, therefore, I cannot vote for the Motion for Adjournment.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): My noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) has, as he always does, made the case which he desires to put before the House perfectly clear. There can now be no doubt whatever as to the character of the vote that is to be given on this Bill. We had understood from some Gentlemen who belong to the Party of which my noble Friend is the distinguished Leader, that their vote for coercion depended, to a certain degree, upon the remedial measures of the Government, that if the remedial measures were satisfactory then they would be justified in voting for this Bill; but if the remedial measures were not satisfactory nothing would induce them to be parties to coercion. Well, on the part of the Liberal Unionists that situation is not only abandoned, but repudiated by the noble Lord. He says, what have we to do in voting for this Bill with the discussion of the land remedies of the Government? They are beside the question altogether. Now, the demand made is that the important statement made last night by the Government in "another place," is, in point of fact, a statement of the remedial measures of the Government, and should be discussed upon the Motion of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). The answer to that which my noble Friend (the Marquess of Hartington) makes is, that that has nothing to do with the question, that the question of coercion is a question pure and simple, to be voted upon by itself without regard in any manner to the remedial proposals of the Government. That, I suppose, is the position taken up. We know it is the position taken up by my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), and I understand it to be the position accepted by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). In these circumstances, I think it will be perfectly clear to the House and to the country that it is a question of coercion pure and simple, and that we enter upon it with the question of remedial measures absolutely repudiated. ["Oh, oh!"] I do not mean to say that the Liberal Unionists repudiate remedial measures; but that they repudiate remedial measures as being a condition of the passing of a Coercion Bill. I thought my noble Friend a little unkind in regard to the Motion for Adjournment made earlier in the evening. I did not approve of the Motion. I have never got up to support a Motion for Adjournment in my life, and never shall do so; but I thought my noble Friend was a little unkind in his criticisms, because that Motion gave an opportunity to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham to make a speech upon the question of the crofters, which was raised by the Motion. Now, I think it is right it should be understood exactly what is asked, and what is refused. What is asked is one night more—that was mentioned by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, and also by the hon. Member for Cork—one night more to discuss the character of the remedial measures. [“No, no!”] What is the use of saying “No, no,” when everybody knows that is what is asked? The Gentlemen who cry “No, no” cannot have heard the statements of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork. What is asked is one night more to discuss the remedial measures of the Government in their bearing upon this measure of coercion. The remedial measures were only introduced into the other House of Parliament last night. They can only be examined, of course, by Members with the Bill before them. If the present demand is refused, it can only be because the persons who support this Motion are determined to vote for coercion at any risk, and whatever the character of the remedial measures may be.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): Sir, I must protest against the reproach addressed by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale to the Irish Members on account of the part they took at the beginning of this evening in supporting the Motion for the Adjournment of the House. Those hon. Gentleman rose in defence of a kindred people. The Highlanders of Scotland speak practically the same language as themselves, they are of the same origin, and they are suffering under almost precisely the same wrongs. I, therefore, cannot think it was fair of the noble Marquess to reproach them. I consider that they showed great self-sacrifice in devoting a part of the time of this evening to the subject raised by the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark). Besides, the Motion for Adjournment was supported by the Colleague and ally of the noble Marquess, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain). But, Sir, as to the necessity of adjourning this debate, I contend that new matter has been brought before the House that demands delay for consideration. Why, Sir, the cases that were raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) have been contradicted, have been disproved, have been utterly scattered by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) this evening. Of the alleged failures of conviction, for instance, out of the four cases mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour), three were disproved by the hon. Member for Cork. I can only say, that the case raised by the hon. Member for Cork and the new information given to the House does demand a better answer than has been given and more time for consideration.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I am very glad indeed that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester (Mr, Picton) has made a very proper reply to the most unfair taunt of the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). It is very easy in cases of this kind for a person of £40,000 a-year to attack the Representatives of the poor, humble crofters. I maintain that we would have been false to our position as Irish Members if we had not shown sympathy with the people who are practically the same as ourselves in blood, and who suffer from exactly the same oppression as we do. I shall leave that point simply by saying that—after the experience we have had of a small group of Members vainly endeavouring to bring political grievances before the House, and of being treated with contumely until the matter assumed such proportions that statesmen themselves could not any longer ignore it—we should have been false to the peasants who sent us here if we had refused to support the demand of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark). I very much regret the course taken by the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) in refusing to give any further opportunity of debate. I think that, to a great extent, we may attribute that to the line lately taken by Members of the Government in supplying their own agents in the Press with statements as to how long the debate should last, and as to what views were taken by the Government Bench, and as to what views they falsely attributed to those in authority in the House. We are discussing on the present occasion a great International question between the two countries, and the interference of newspapers—[*Cries of* "Question!"] It is the question. I maintain that if newspapers were to write with regard to decisions which are given, or which are to be given, by Courts of Law, in the same way as they write respecting matters which are to be brought before the House of Commons—[*Renewed cries of* "Question!"] I am dealing with the Question—they would be at once cast for contempt of Court. I deprecate also the course some hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, of some six or eight months' experience in this House, take in calling out "Question" and in rising to points of Order——

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. and learned Gentleman is not now confining himself to the Question before the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I regret, Mr. Speaker, I was drawn astray by way of rebuke to hon. Gentlemen opposite. I maintain that the endeavour to provoke speedy conclusions of debates by the system of manipulating the Press which has been introduced by gentlemen connected with the Government since the Clôture Rule was passed, must lead to the greatest mischief. Upon what ground do we ask for an adjournment of the present debate. The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) said that if my hon. Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), or my hon. Friend the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), or any other Gentleman on these Benches, had intervened in this debate, he would have been heard with great patience. No doubt he would. But he would have taken up time which had been occupied by the Member for some English constituency, whose voice naturally commended itself in a greater degree to the attention of Englishmen than the voice of an Irish Member would. And now, for the first time, we are anxious for the free play of English opinion upon Irish questions; and we are told, forsooth, that we should have risen as Irish Members, and not have allowed English Members to be heard. I entirely repudiate that view. We are anxious to hear English Members, and more than that, our constituents in Ireland would a thousand times prefer that we should sit silent if it were necessary in order to enable English Members to be heard. That is one of the reasons why in this debate, which has already proceeded for four or five nights, my hon. Friends, although they could bring an enormous amount of knowledge to bear upon the discussion, have not ventured to endeavour to shut out English Members from addressing the House. Under these circumstances, I would ask the House if it is fair, when we have a Bill which is to last, not three years, or 30 years, or 300, or 3,000, but for ever—is it fair on an occasion when, for the first time since the Union was carried, those who approve of that Union should demand that the Irish Members should be clôtured after a single week's debate on the first reading? And why? The reason for the demand for the closure of the debate is in order that the Bill may be rushed through the House; and next week, when the Chief Secretary comes forward to move the second reading, he will probably content himself by formally taking off his hat. This is part of a preliminary arrangement for clôturing the debate on the second reading. Therefore, if the Irish Members consented now without a protest to the closure of debate, we may be making out a case for the Government some day next week to close the debate on the second reading, after a few nights' discussion. They will be prepared to say—"You have already had five nights' debate on the first reading, and surely you may put up with a considerable less amount of time for the discussion of the second reading." Now, that is not the way to treat questions of this kind, when the Irish Members are anxious to discuss the grievances of the people they represent. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Hartington) says that my hon. Friend the Member for Cork did not take up much time in discussing the remedial proposals of the Government; but I would remind the House that my hon. Friend had no sooner ventured to enter upon that line of discussion than the Chief Secretary, in the most churlish manner, rose to Order. Let me tell the right hon. Gentleman that if he is anxious to maintain his relations with the Irish people, the way to gain their respect and confidence is not, on a Motion of this kind, when a debate of the greatest importance is proceeding, to endeavour to stop the leader of 5,000,000 of people by rising to Order.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I did not rise to Order for the purpose of stopping the hon. Member for Cork, but I rose to put a question to the Speaker—whether, if the hon. Member went into details upon the Land Question, I should be allowed the power of replying to him.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I interpreted the remark of the right hon. Gentleman in that way. I looked upon it as a "friendly lead," as it is called—a sort of suggestion that my hon. Friend was straying from the Question.

MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. and learned Gentleman that by the Standing Order, the debate on a Motion for Adjournment must be strictly confined to that Question.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I think I was quite in Order in explaining why it was that my hon. Friend the Member for Cork did not endeavour to deal with that Question. Of course, after the intimation you have given, I will at once pass from that subject. We have now in the course of debate in this country two great questions on which the passions of Irishmen are aroused—namely, the question of land and the question of coercion. If the hon. Gentlemen opposite desire the amity and friendship of the Irish people, I cannot understand why the noble Marquess and his Friends, or rather his Colleagues opposite, should resist the demand of five-sixths of the Irish people, and declare that on an occasion of this kind the debate ought at once to be stopped. Time is not the essence of the question. The Government allowed day after day to lapse, and made no attempt to bring in their Bill. They occupied nearly a month in discussing questions wholly irrelevant to the present subject. They occupied a month on the first rule of procedure, whereas if they had been as anxious as they profess they would have brought in this Bill much more speedily, and would not grudge us at the present moment the single additional day claimed by my hon. Friend for the prolongation of this debate. If, instead of 85 Irish Members claiming an adjournment of a Question so important to the people they represent, we had the English or Scotch Members claiming an adjournment, I do not believe there would be any attempt to close the debate. We hear a great deal, on occasions like the present, of the anxiety which possesses the English breast to heal up the wounds of Ireland; and yet when we seek to lay our views before the House, we are met with the most strenuous attempts to close our mouths, and that, too, on an occasion when the Government are proposing to introduce a measure affecting the lives and interests of the Irish people for future generations. It is proposed that the first reading of such a Bill and the policy of the Government are to be inaugurated by closing the mouths of the Representatives of the people who will be most seriously affected.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 254; Noes 361: Majority 107.—(Div. List, No. 84.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): At this time of the morning I do not think we ought to continue the discussion upon so important a question as that which has been brought before the House by the hon. Member for Cork. An Amendment has been moved relating to the whole condition of Ireland, and upon it only a few speeches have been made. As I think the magnitude of the Question entitles it to further consideration than can be given to it at this hour (1.50), I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Dillwyn.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I venture to hope that the discussion may be allowed to continue, after the very marked and conclusive manner in which the House has just expressed its opinion on Division. I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman opposite to use his influence to save the House from the necessity of dividing again on the question of adjournment, against which the opinion of the House has been so conclusively given, and by which no good end can be attained.

Sir EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): I am aware that by the vote I shall give, if the present Motion is pressed to a Division, I shall lay myself open to the charge of obstruction. It has never been my habit to delay measures which, in my opinion, are useful or necessary; but I feel we have a distinct case for asking for another night's discussion on this question. We are told that the proposals of the Government with regard to land in Ireland have nothing to do with the present question, and ought not to affect it; but I reply that from the other side the House has had repeatedly put before it the proposition that this measure is simply one of expediency. It is said that the question of Ireland is already——

Mr. SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that he is not confining his remarks to the Question before the House.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I regret that I have transgressed the Rule of Debate in my endeavour to give my reasons for supporting the Motion of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn). My reason is that a distinctly new element has been introduced into the debate. I quite agree that it is not usual to move the adjournment of the House on the first reading of a Bill; but that is when a *primâ facie* case has been made out. I was perfectly willing to admit, up to a certain time to-night, that a *primâ facie* case had been made out; but the speech of the hon. Member for Cork has altered that opinion. That speech has appealed to us so forcibly as to make us feel that one more night, at least, even if it be on Saturday, should be devoted to the question of the first reading of this Bill. It is no ordinary Bill which is before the House. No doubt, it is an extreme measure to oppose a first reading; but when the first reading of this Bill has been passed, I believe that circumstances will press forward the Government faster than they anticipate. The whole aspect of the Irish Question will be altered, and we know that then the Government, in their own defence, will be obliged to press forward the remaining stages of this Bill. It is for that reason I think we are entitled to continue the debate on the question of the first reading another day.

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn), rose to address the House. His remarks, supposed to be in support of the Motion for Adjournment, were rendered inaudible by cries from the Ministerial Benches.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I rise, Mr. Speaker, to say a word in the belief that courtesy requires it, although it is not an agreeable choice that is put forward when the alternative lies between silence or a verbal answer on a question on which I am not able to agree with the right hon. Gentleman. I find, on thinking over the appeal that the right hon. Gentleman has made, that he has furnished me with one argument, and it is this—if I thought that the speech of the hon. Member for Cork contained no argument that had not been answered by Her Majesty's Government, then I think we should have no reason to complain of the course they propose to take. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to me fundamentally to mistake the character of debates in this House. He appears to think that it is the privilege, and propriety as it were, of each side of the House to consider in what degree their interest is affected, or otherwise, by sufficiency or insufficiency of speeches. I take a totally different view of the matter. My view is this. Her Majesty's Government have made a most important proposal to the House. There having been a most powerful impeachment of that proposal—an impeachment, as I think, to the total destruction of the original proposal—by the leading Representative of the Irish people, it is due, not merely from the Government to themselves, but from the Government to the entire House and to the country, that an answer should be made. With regard to other matters, I must frankly tell the right hon. Gentleman that the system of extreme and unprecedented pressure which has been applied, and which, it appears, is to be continued to be applied to very large bodies of Members in this House, and to the Irish Members who are not so large a body, will have special and peculiar interest. If I saw on the part of the Government a disposition to allow a reasonable interval for consideration conformable with Parliamentary precedent, I should gladly respond to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman by acting in the sense he desires; but by this system of pressure he renders me certainly totally powerless for the purpose.

Dr. KENNY (Cork, S.): I would point out to Her Majesty's Government that I am one of those Members from Ireland who take a deep interest in this matter, which is one of the greatest importance to the Irish people. I am one of those Members who have a right to speak upon it, but who will be refused the opportunity of doing so if the debate is closed to-night. I think the Government are by no means carrying out the contract they entered into in passing the Closure Rule by using the Rule to close a debate of such vast importance to Ireland without allowing a greater number of Representatives from that country to express their views. My hon. Friend the Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. Harrington) offered a most interesting and able defence this evening of the National League, of which he is a member and the law adviser. But I also occupy a position in regard to the Body now threatened with extinction by the Government which gives me the right to express an opinion upon the subject. This is the only opportunity I have had, owing to the action of the Government, to say a single word on the question. It seems to me beyond all precedent, and beyond all the limits of everything like fair play, that the Government should close a debate, or attempt, as they are now doing, to force the closing of a debate of such great importance to the Members of this House, and involving principles so dear, I will not say alone to Irishmen, but to Englishmen also, without giving us full and ample opportunity for discussing the question in all its bearings. I do hope that the words which have fallen with reference to the Motion now before the House from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian may have some effect upon Her Majesty's Government in inducing them to allow the Motion to pass, and that they will not press by means of a brute majority, and by force alone, and not by force of argument—that they will not press upon us the closure of this debate. Sir, I am well aware that no appeal of mine, or any Member who occupies as humble a position as I do, can have any effect on Her Majesty's Government; but I feel I should not be doing my duty to those who sent me here and to my country, if I did not protest in the most solemn manner against the pressure of this Motion on the present occasion.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 253; Noes 361: Majority 108.—(Div. List, No. 85.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. William Henry Smith rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Question put accordingly, "That the Question be now put."

The House *divided*:—Ayes 361; Noes 253: Majority 108.

AYES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, Colonel R. H. L.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Atkinson, H. J.
Baden-Powell, G. S.
Baggallay, E.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Balfour, G. W.
Banes, Major G. E.
Baring, Viscount
Barnes, A.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Bass, H.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beckett, E. W.
Beckett, W.
Bective, Earl of
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. de la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Colonel H. B. H.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bright, right hon. J.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, Col. A. M.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, Lord H.
Buchanan, T. R.
Burdett-Coutts, W. L. Ash.-B.
Burghley, Lord
Caine, W. S.
Caldwell, J.
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, R. F. F.
Chamberlain, rt. hn. J.
Chamberlain, R.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coddington, W.
Coghill, D. H.
Collings, J.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corbett, A. C.
Corbett, J.

Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Courtney, L. H.
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. S.
Crossley, Sir S. B.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Currie, Sir D.
Curzon, Viscount
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, C.
Davenport, H. T.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon, G.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Dugdale, J. S.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, right hon. Sir W. H.
Eaton, H. W.
Ebrington, Viscount
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Elliot, Sir G.
Elliot, G. W.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Evelyn, W. J.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Feilden, Lt.-Gen. R. J.
Fellowes, W. H.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finch, G. H.
Finch-Hatton, hon. M. E. G.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitz-Wygram, Gen. Sir F. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Fulton, J. F.
Gardner, R. Richardson-
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Gibson, J. G.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hn. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Green, Sir E.
Greenall, Sir G.
Greene, E.
Grimston, Viscount
Grove, Sir T. F.
Gurdon, R. T.
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, General Sir E. B.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, E.
Hardcastle, F.
Hartington, Marq. of
Hastings, G. W.
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Heneage, right hon. E.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hill, A. S.
Hingley, B.
Hoare, S.
Hobhouse, H.
Holland, right hon. Sir H. T.
Holloway, G.
Holmes, rt. hon. H.
Hornby, W. H.
Houldsworth, W. H.
Howard, J.
Howard, J. M.
Howorth, H. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, rt. hn. J. G.
Hubbard, E.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hulse, E. H.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacs, L. H.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenrick, W.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.
Ker, R. W. B.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
King-Harman, Colonel E. R.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. T.
Knowles, L.
Kynoch, G.
Lafone, A.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lea, T.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Leighton, S.
Lethbridge, Sir R.
Lewis, Sir O. C. E.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, J. W.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
M'Calmont, Captain J.
M'Garel-Hogg, Sir J.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Manners, rt. hon. Lord J. J. R.
March, Earl of
Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Matthews, rt. hn. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Admiral R. C.
Mildmay, F. B.
Milvain, T.
More, R. J.
Morrison, W.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Norris, E. S.
Northcote, hon. H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Pitt-Lewis, G.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Plunkett, hon. J. W.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Price, Captain G. E.
Puleston, J. H.
Quilter, W. C.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Richardson, T.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ritchie, rt. hn. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robertson, W. T.
Robinson, B.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Ross, A. H.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Round, J.
Royden, T. B.
Russell, Sir G.
Russell, T. W.
St. Aubyn, Sir J.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Sclater-Booth, rt. hn. G.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, rt. hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Captain C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Sidebottom, W.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hn. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stewart, M.
Sutherland, T.
Swetenham, E.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Talbot, J. G.
Tapling, T. K.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Theobald, J.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tottenham, A. L.
Townsend, F.
Trotter, H. J.

Tyler, Sir H. W.
Verdin, R.
Vernon, hon. G. R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watkin, Sir E. W.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wiggin, H.
Williams, J. Powell-
Wilson, Sir S.
Winn, hon. R.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P.
Yerburgh, R. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.

Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Allison, R. A.
Anderson, C. H.
Asher, A.
Asquith, H. H.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, J.
Balfour, Sir G.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Barbour, W. B.
Barran, J.
Beaumont, W. B.
Biggar, J. G.
Blake, J. A.
Blake, T.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Bradlaugh, C.
Bright, Jacob
Bright, W. L.
Broadhurst, H.
Brown, A. L.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Bryce, J.
Buxton, S. C.
Byrne, G. M.
Cameron, C.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Chance, P. A.
Channing, F. A.
Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Cohen, A.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Colman, J. J.
Commins, A.
Conway, M.
Conybeare, C. A. V.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Craven, J.
Crawford, D.
Crawford, W.
Cremer, W. R.
Crossley, E.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dodds, J.
Duff, R. W.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, J. E.
Ellis, T. E.
Esslemont, P.
Evershed, S.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finucane, J.
Flower, C.
Flynn, J. C.
Foley, P. J.
Foljambe, C. G. S.
Forster, Sir C.
Forster, Sir W. B.
Fowler, rt. hon. H. H.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Fry, T.
Fuller, G. P.
Gane, J. L.
Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gilhooly, J.
Gill, H. J.
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Gourley, E. T.
Graham, R. C.
Gray, E. D.
Grey, Sir E.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Harcourt, rt. hn. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, M.
Healy, T. M.
Holden, I.
Hooper, J.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Illingworth, A.
Jacoby, J. A.
James, hon. W. H.
James, C. H.
Joicey, J.
Jordan, J.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenny, J. E.
Kenny, M. J.
Kilcoursie, right hon. Viscount
Labouchere, H.
Lacaita, C. C.
Lalor, R.
Lane, W. J.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leahy, J.
Leake, R.
Lefevre, right hon. G. J. S.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
Lyell, L.
Macdonald, W. A.
MacInnes, M.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Carthy, J. H.
M'Donald, P.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
M'Lagan, P.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Maitland, W. F.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Marum, E. M.
Mason, S.
Mayne, T.
Menzies, R. S.
Molloy, B. C.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Mundella, right hon. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J. (Kerry)
O'Connor, J. (Tippry.)
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Hea, P.
O'Kelly, J.
Palmer, Sir C. M.
Parnell, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Pease, Sir J. W.
Pease, A. E.
Pease, H. F.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pinkerton, J.
Playfair, rt. hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Potter, T. B.
Power, P. J.
Power, R.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Provand, A. D.
Pugh, D.
Pyne, J. D.
Quinn, T.
Rathbone, W.
Redmond, J. E.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Reed, Sir E. J.
Reid, R. T.
Rendel, S.
Richard, H.
Roberts, J.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, T.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Rowlands, W. B.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Russell, E. R.
Samuelson, Sir B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sexton, T.
Shaw, T.
Sheehan, J. D.
Sheil, E.
Shirley, W. S.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stepney-Cowell, Sir A. K.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Storey, S.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Thomas, A.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Waddy, S. D.
Wallace, R.
Wardle, H.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Whitbread, S.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, J.

Williamson, S.	Wright, C.
Wilson, H. J.	Yeo, F. A.
Wilson, I.	
Winterbotham, A. B.	TELLERS.
Woodall, W.	Marjoribanks, rt. hon. E.
Woodhead, J.	Morley, A.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question," put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put.

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the prevention and punishment of Crime in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto, and that Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General, and Mr. Attorney General for Ireland do prepare and bring it in.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 217.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Local Government District of Aldershot, the Improvement Act District of Bethesda, the Local Government District of Bridlington, the Borough of Cheltenham, the Local Government District of Epsom, the Special Drainage District of Merton Rush, the Local Government District of Pontypool, the Borough of Saint Helen's, and the Improvement Act District of Surbiton, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 216.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Three o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 4th April, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Pharmacy Acts Amendment* [210].

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2)* [166].

Provisional Order Bill — *Third Reading* — Local Government (Ireland) (Carrick-on-Suir)* [200], and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

POST OFFICE (SCOTLAND)—GENERAL POST OFFICE, EDINBURGH—PROMOTIONS.

Mr. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether information has reached him that much dissatisfaction has arisen among the operators in the Telegraph Department of the General Post Office, Edinburgh, by reason of certain promotions recently made in that department; whether the supervising class in the department has recently been increased by two supervisors; whether one of the men, who for several years past has performed the duty of relieving the supervisors during their holidays, has been passed over in appointing the new supervisors; whether it would have been in accordance with the usual practice of the department to appoint this man to one of the new supervisorships; and, if so, why has it not been done in this case; whether the first class of telegraphists has recently been increased by fourteen; whether thirteen appointments have already been made; whether the thirteen telegraphists who stood at the head of the second class, some of whom had fifteen years experience, have been passed over in making those appointments; and, if so, why; whether, in making those appointments, one man has been promoted over the heads of seven others, another over fourteen, another over eighteen; whether another has been placed in the first class, although his number in the second class was forty-seven; whether this latter telegraphist is related to the Superintendent of Telegraphs in the Edinburgh Office; whether one of the telegraphists, who has been placed in the first class, is unable to work some of the instruments in the Edinburgh office; whether another, by reason of a disabled arm, is physically incapacitated for performing work as an operator; and, if these matters or any of them are as stated, what is the explanation?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I have no reason to believe that the promotions to which the first part of the Question refers have given rise to general dissatisfaction. With some exceptions, the answers to the honourable Member's subsequent Questions are in the affirmative. Of those standing at the head of the second class of telegraphists, the number passed over is five, and not 13; no one of those promoted is physically incapacitated for performing work as an operator; and all are able to work the instruments in the Edinburgh Office. The reasons for passing over the acting supervisor and the five telegraphists are that the telegraphists are not considered fit for the duties of the first class, and the acting supervisor has seriously misconducted himself. The telegraphist who stood 47 on the second class is, I understand, connected with the Superintendent by marriage. He had longer service and greater experience than any other member of the same class, the reason of his occupying so low a position being that some years ago he left Edinburgh for Greenock, and returned only in 1882, re-entering at the bottom of the Office. Since his re-entry he has been constantly employed on first class duties.

COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS—TORY ISLAND.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether it is intended to connect the lighthouse on Tory Island, off the north-west coast of Ireland, with the mainland telegraph system, by a short cable and length of land lines; whether the cost of doing such a work would be a few thousand pounds only; whether the necessity of doing this, in protection of human life, and in aid of shipping—especially of the emigrant traffic—has over and over again been influentially represented to every Government Department concerned, and, so far, in vain; and, whether it is the fact that H.M.S. *Wasp* was wrecked off Tory Island and lost, in the absence of assistance, while a Government vessel, commanded by Captain Gallwey, was at the time in Belfast Lough, and did not go out to help for want of information?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I fully recognize the great importance of the question raised by the hon. Baronet. I would point out that a Committee, appointed by the President of the Board of Trade, and of which the Earl of Crawford is Chairman, is now inquiring into the subject of electrical communication between light vessels and outlying lighthouses and the mainland; and I have no doubt that the case of Tory Island, with that of other lighthouses, will be fully considered by the Committee.

THE MAGISTRACY (SCOTLAND)—THE SHERIFF-SUBSTITUTE OF INVERNESS-SHIRE.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he is aware that the Sheriff-Substitute of the Long Island District of Inverness-shire, notwithstanding his having to sit in judgment in causes arising between landlord and tenant, such as poaching, rents, evictions, and the like, has for years accepted from the proprietor of the island of North Uist, the privileges of free shooting and fishing in that island, a part of the Long Island District; and, whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the matter with the view of issuing orders that no judges be permitted to accept such gifts within the districts under their official jurisdiction?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): I believe it to be the fact that the same courtesy is extended to the Sheriff-Substitute of the Long Island District, in the matter of sport, as is very usually granted to other Resident Sheriffs throughout Scotland. I have no intention of interfering with ordinary social courtesies in the manner suggested, and, indeed, have no power to issue any orders on such a matter.

HARBOURS OF REFUGE AND LIFE-SAVING HARBOURS.

Admiral MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether he is prepared to make such financial arrangements as will enable the Board of Trade to carry out the construction of such Harbours of Refuge and Life-Saving Harbours, as will tend to minimise the enormous loss of life and property which now takes place annually on the coasts of the United Kingdom?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): If my hon. and gallant Friend contemplates the construction by the Board of Trade of harbours out of public funds at the sole cost of the Exchequer, I am afraid I cannot undertake to make the financial arrangement to which he alludes; but I hope that arrangements will be made under which the Board of Trade, and the Public Works Loan Commissioners, will be able to act in complete harmony as to policy with reference to granting loans at low rates of interest to Local Authorities and others who desire to undertake the construction of harbours.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND)—DESTRUCTION OF IMMATURE FISH.

Colonel MALCOLM (Argyllshire) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the vast quantity of immature and unmarketable fish killed within the last month on the Ballantyne Banks; whether about 400 tons of undersized herrings were sold in one week for manure; whether the Fishery Board could put a stop to such destructive waste by enforcing the close season, which is the law at the present moment?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): I am informed that it is true that large quantities of immature herring have been captured and sold as manure in the district referred to. After the passing of the Act of 1860 forbidding herring fishing between certain dates on the coast of Scotland, the Fishery Commissioners endeavoured to carry out the prohibition, but found it impracticable to do so. But that Act related solely to the prosecution of herring fishing, and if, as I understand, the immature fish were captured in trawls which were being used for white fishing, the law referred to in the third clause of the Question may not apply. I shall consider the question, and communicate with my hon. Friend.

ARMS (IRELAND) ACT—GUN LICENCES —BALLYMACARBERY PETTY SESSIONS.

Mr. PATRICK POWER (Waterford, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state if Mr. Joseph P. Mulcahy, of Ballydonough, County Waterford, applied on 15th March at Ballymacarbery Petty Sessions for a gun licence; whether the magistrates present were Mr. Redmond, R.M. and two local justices (Mr. Leachman and Dr. Walsh); whether any person in Court opposed the application; whether the Court granted the application and Mr. Redmond, R.M. promised to have the licence sent to Mr. Mulcahy in due course; whether, after the rising of the Court, the resident magistrate informed Mr. Mulcahy that he could not grant him the licence; and, whether he can state on what grounds the licence was refused?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I understand that Mr. Mulcahy's application for an arms licence was made and refused under the circumstances mentioned in the Question. I shall communicate further with the Resident Magistrate on the subject.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND) — MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Mr. LALOR (Queen's Co., Leix) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he is aware that Dr. David Jacob, the late visiting physician of the Maryborough District Lunatic Asylum, resigned his position in that institution about nine months ago; if he is aware that the said Dr. David Jacob is the brother-in-law of Dr. Joseph Henry Hatchell, who was then and is now the resident medical superintendent of the said asylum; if he is aware that, after the resignation of Dr. David Jacob, the Board of Governors elected his son, Dr. William G. Jacob, to the same office of visiting physician to the said asylum; if he is aware that the said Dr. William G. Jacob is nephew to the resident medical superintendent of the said Asylum, Dr. Joseph Henry Hatchell; and, if the appointment of Dr. William G. Jacob to this office, of which his uncle is the resident medical superintendent, has been sanctioned by the Lord Lieutenant; and, if so, considering th close family relationship existing between these gentlemen, is it the intention of Her Majesty's Government to continue this appointment?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I find that the facts are substantially as stated, with the exception of a slight inaccuracy in the degree of relationship. The Board of Governors having advertised the vacancy in the usual manner, elected Dr. W. G. Jacob, subject to the usual period of probation, at the expiration of which they unanimously confirmed his appointment, and the Irish Government being of opinion that the circumstances of the case would not justify a refusal to accept the decided opinion of the Governors, have ratified the appointment.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POSTAL ACCOMMODATION TO NEWTOWNARDS, &c.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Postmaster General, If he has yet received the information requisite to enable him to make definite arrangements for giving increased postal accommodation to Newtownards, Downpatrick, Newcastle, and the intermediate towns?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I have received the further information which I called for respecting the mail service on the Belfast and County Down Railway, and I am in communication with the Treasury upon the subject.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) — GRAND JURY OF WICKLOW CO.— BRIDGE OVER THE VARTRY.

Mr. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he is aware that the Grand Jury of the County Wicklow have just thrown out a presentment for the construction of a bridge over the River Vartry, in the county town of Wicklow; whether it is a fact that the only bridge over the river has been condemned as unsafe for vehicular traffic, a condition of things to which the Judge of Assize referred in the following terms —

> "He would not undertake to advise the Grand Jury as to whether they would be liable or not in the case of accident, but he thought in some shape or form they should discharge their duty in the matter;"

whether he can state how the Grand Jury is constituted, and whether the members of it are elected or appointed, and by whom; and, is there any superior authority to compel them to take the necessary steps, in the interests of the public at large, to carry out works of the kind?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that the Grand Jury did not throw out a presentment for the construction of a bridge; but they came to the conclusion that it would be better to try to secure the existing bridge, for which purpose they have passed a presentment of £600. The matter will come before the Justices and cesspayers at Road Sessions next month, and it will rest with them to decide whether a new bridge is preferable. The constitution and functions of Grand Juries are regulated by Statute.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) —TELEGRAPHISTS' OVERTIME.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is a fact that telegraphists in London are paid overtime for the work they perform between midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday; and, if so, whether he will extend this proper recognition of exceptional labour to the provincial telegraphists?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that a similar Question was put to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) in March, 1886, and I am disposed to concur with the reply which he then gave. The arrangements in London differ from those in the country, and wages in London do not include remuneration for service on Sundays, which is, when performed, paid for separately. The question of pay for Sunday work in the Provinces was carefully considered at the date of the reorganization of 1881, and the scale of weekly wages was fixed so as to cover two hours' work on Sundays. Applications have been received by three successive Postmasters General for further pay in addition to that given on Sundays, and have been refused by each. I am not prepared to depart from that decision.

POST OFFICE (METROPOLIS)—MEMORIAL OF OVERSEERS.

Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether a Memorial from the overseers of the Metropolitan District Post Offices was forwarded in November last; and, if so, will he favour the memorialists with a reply to their petition?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): A

Memorial from the overseers of the Metropolitan District Post Offices was received towards the close of last year and is now under consideration. I hope to be able to reply to it shortly.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—DEATH OF HANLON—ARREST OF SUB-INSPECTOR SOMERVILLE AND CONSTABLE WARD.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether in the case of District-Inspector Somerville and Constable Garrett Ward, against whom a Coroner's jury at Youghal returned a verdict of wilful murder, it is the intention of the Crown to proceed by indictment against them as well as upon the coroner's inquisition; and, what is the usual practice in such cases?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) in reply, said, that if a person had been brought to trial in recent times upon a Coroner's inquisition, it was a very exceptional proceeding. He did not know of such a course being adopted in modern times, and he did not propose to adopt it in this case. As to the rest of the Question, it would be clearly improper for him to make any statement.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was not aware that at Trim Assizes, in County Meath, before the late Baron Pigott, a man was tried for murder upon the Coroner's inquisition?

MR. HOLMES, in reply, said that he was aware of the case; but his recollection was that the inquisition was quashed by the Judge, and the trial did not proceed.

POLICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—COUNTY POLICE AND MUNICIPAL BOROUGHS.

MR. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in reference to a recent statement made by him on the subject of county magistrates sending county police into municipal boroughs, Whether it is intended to insist on each municipal borough having a separate police force; and, if so, when such a change is likely to be brought about?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am not aware to what statement of mine my hon. Friend refers; but it certainly is not my intention to insist on every municipal borough having a separate police force.

THE MAGISTRACY (ENGLAND AND WALES)—APPOINTMENT OF WELSH MAGISTRATES—NONCONFORMISTS.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) (for Sir THOMAS ESMONDE) Dublin Co., S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If there are any Nonconformists in Flintshire qualified to act as magistrates; if so, why there are no Nonconformists holding the commission of the peace; if there is any likelihood of Nonconformists being soon appointed magistrates; if misunderstandings or miscarriages of justice have ever occurred in consequence of many of the present magistrates being ignorant of the Welsh language; and, if, in future magisterial appointments, care will be taken to select gentlemen who understand the language of the people?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I have received a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Flint, and he informs me that he has, from time to time, made inquiries, and cannot ascertain that there are any Nonconformists resident in the county possessing the status and qualifications prescribed by law for a county magistrate. If any should be found, and if the Bench should require strengthening, no consideration of religion or politics would deter the Lord Lieutenant from recommending them for appointment. I am not aware that any misunderstandings or miscarriages of justice have occurred in consequence of the magistrates being ignorant of the Welsh language. English is the language of our Courts of Justice, and the evidence of a Welsh-speaking witness must be interpreted into English, not by the magistrate, but by a sworn interpreter. The Lord Lieutenant will, in the future as in the past, select those men who are, in his opinion, best qualified to assist in the administration of justice.

MR. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked, whether the right hon. and learned Gentleman was aware that these sworn interpreters were often extremely incompetent men?

Mr. MATTHEWS, in reply, said, that he did not pretend to know the qualifications of the interpreters.

PRISONS (IRELAND)—CLOSING OF RICHMOND PRISON, DUBLIN.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, before coming to any decision as to closing the Richmond Prison, Dublin, the Government will give the House an opportunity of discussing the question?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am afraid I cannot undertake to provide special facilities for the discussion of this question; but I trust to the ingenuity of the hon. Gentleman to find an opportunity. No doubt he will be able to do so. I have already stated that the consideration of the subject is postponed for the present.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Would the right hon. Gentleman be able to say what is the total accommodation in all the Irish gaols?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. and learned Gentleman will put down the Question on the Paper, I will answer it.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—EARLY CLOSING AT TULLAMORE.

Dr. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he has received from the Town Commissioners of Tullamore a Memorial setting forth the grave inconvenience caused by the too early closing of the evening post in that town; and, whether he will change the time of closing till some hour not earlier than 9 o'clock.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I have received the Memorial referred to by the hon. Member. The mail car from Tullamore has been despatched from Tullamore hitherto at an hour that would admit of the car reaching Moate in time to form a connection with the down night mail train on the Midland Great Western Railway; but I find that by sending the bags for the down mail by a train to Athlone, the mail car can be kept back at Tullamore till 11 p.m., thus affording a later despatch for letters to Dublin. The improvement must be confined to week days, as on Sundays there is no train available for the conveyance of the bags for the down mail. I will give instructions accordingly.

THE MAGISTRATES (IRELAND) — DR. CLARKE, OF PHILIPSTOWN, KING'S COUNTY.

Dr. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Dr. Clarke, of Philipstown, King's County, was removed from the Commission of the Peace; and, whether he will state the reason for his removal?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Dr. Clarke has been superseded by the Lord Chancellor for taking part in proceedings which were inconsistent with respect for the law, and with the free exercise of legal rights.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, as he doubts whether there are any Protestant Home Rulers outside the House of Commons, whether the fact that this gentleman was President of the King's County Branch of the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association had anything to do with his removal?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I know nothing about Dr. Clarke's religious beliefs.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the right hon. Gentleman if this case of Boycotting was amongst the statistics of crimes upon which he based his case for coercion?

[No reply.]

Subsequently,

Dr. FOX asked the right hon. Gentleman to say specifically why Dr. Clarke was removed from the Commission of the Peace, and whether he would lay upon the Table the communication from the Lord Chancellor?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, in reply, said, he had indicated in a general and, he believed, adequate manner, the grounds upon which the Lord Chancellor had removed Dr. Clarke from the Commission of the Peace. He could not promise to lay upon the Table of the House any further details.

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART—ACTION OF LIGHT ON WATER COLOURS.

Sir ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether the Committee appointed in July last year by the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education to consider the question of the action of light on paintings in water colours, has made its Report; and, if not, when it may be expected?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): I am informed that the Committee have adjourned until a series of experiments by the scientific experts (Dr. Russell, F.R.S., and Captain Abney, F.R.S.) on the action of light on various pigments and their mixture under diverse conditions are completed. I understand that this may be in three or four months; but it is a question which must be investigated thoroughly, and no precise limit of time can be at present fixed, as it would obviously be useless to attempt to hasten a decision.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—OPENING OF WESTMINSTER HALL.

SIR ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, seeing the inclemency of the weather and the draughts that Members are exposed to in passing by the Cloister, Whether Westminster Hall cannot be opened for the passage of Members of this House?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department has given orders to the police to allow the passage of Members of Parliament through Westminster Hall.

POST OFFICE—RATES OF POSTAGE WITH THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he has, during the past two years, been in correspondence with the Governments of any of the Australian Colonies, in regard to reductions in the postage rates between those Colonies and the United Kingdom; and, whether those Governments have expressed to him any desire for such reductions; and, if so, whether he can lay upon the Table copies of any such correspondence?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): The Post Office has not, during the last two years, been in correspondence with the Governments of any of the Australian Colonies in regard to reductions in the postage rates between those Colonies and the United Kingdom. There had been some correspondence with the Post Offices of Victoria and New South Wales on the subject of a proposal to establish post-cards between this country and those Colonies, but that correspondence would not, I think, be useful to the House, as it is not yet complete.

NORTH AMERICA—GOLD DISCOVERIES ON THE CANADIAN BOUNDARY LINE.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he has received any official information of the existence of extensive gold deposits on or about the boundary line between Canada and the United States; and, what steps have been or are about to be taken to determine the exact boundary between British and United States territory in that direction?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The Government have received no official information of the gold deposits referred to. The United States Government last year made a proposal for a survey of the boundary between Alaska and Canadian territory, and some correspondence has ensued upon it; but no definite result has yet been attained, and the United States Congress have recently refused the appropriation proposed for a preliminary survey.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES—REPORT OF THE CHIEF REGISTRAR FOR 1885.

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When the Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for the year 1885, Part II.A, which was laid upon the Table on the 10th March, will be printed and circulated; and, whether it will be printed in such a manner that it may be circulated in separate sheets, or in some inexpensive way, in order to be easily accessible to the working classes, to whom the information afforded in the quinquennial Returns which it contains is of great importance?

THE SECRETARY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.), in reply, said, that the Report in question was ready for press, and the printing would be expedited as much as possible. He had discussed with the Chief Registrar the means of making it easily accessible, and they had decided to issue the Report this year in six parts.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked, whether the hon. Gentleman was aware that there was a deficiency in the number of copies of the Registrar's Returns issued, the Return for 1884 not being now obtainable, and whether he would give orders that the Office should not be so starved in its supply.

Mr. JACKSON said, that he was not aware of the state of facts described by the hon. Member; but if the hon. Member would communicate with him, he would endeavour to put the matter right.

POST OFFICE—POSTAL ORDERS FOR SMALL SUMS.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the Postmaster General, If, in order to facilitate the transmission of small sums of money by the post, he will make such arrangements that Postal Orders of various values, including amounts of 1*s*., 2*s*. 6*d*., 5*s*., 10*s*., and £1 may be purchased by the public in cheque-book form, say in mixed amounts of no less than £5 per book, under conditions that the orders are signed with name and address of sender, payable only to order of payee, and not negotiable?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I think I should explain that I have received a great number of suggestions with reference to the subject to which he refers, and that these suggestions are being carefully examined with a view to ascertain if any of them contain practical ideas which are worth adopting. However, I shall be glad to add the suggestion of the hon. Member to the number of suggestions to be investigated.

THE PARKS (METROPOLIS)—BOATING IN REGENT'S PARK.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether, for twenty-seven years, the public have been able to use the whole of the ornamental waters of Regent's Park for boating purposes; if so, why their use has been curtailed by a chain being put across one part; and, whether he will order its removal?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University), in reply, said, that it would not be quite accurate to say that the whole of the ornamental waters in Regent's Park had always been open to the public for boating purposes; but the hon. Member's Question, no doubt, referred to the fact that a chain was placed across the water under the new bridge at the southern end of the water, opposite to Clarence Gate. This was done, he was informed, to prevent overcrowding at certain times. He would inquire into the matter, with the view of seeing whether the restriction could with safety be relaxed.

WAR OFFICE—MR. J. FLEMING, VETERINARY SURGEON-IN-CHIEF, WAR DEPARTMENT.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether Mr. J. Fleming, Veterinary Surgeon-in-Chief of the Army Veterinary Department of the War Office, is the same Mr. Fleming, F.R.C.V.S., who holds the appointment of Head Veterinary Surgeon to the North Metropolitan Tramway Company; and, if so, whether it is consistent with the proper discharge of his official duties that he should also hold a paid appointment in a Commercial Company?

The SECRETARY (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle), in reply, said, it was not a fact that Mr. Fleming held the appointment referred to in connection with the Tramway Company, which had its own staff of veterinary surgeons, but he had been sent for from time to time for consultation when any serious disease had broken out among the Company's horses. These consultations had not interfered in any way with his work; but, on the contrary, the experience so gained, especially as to glanders, had been of considerable advantage to the Service.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—CONSTABLE OSBOROUGH, CO. DOWN.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Constable Osborough, Royal Irish Constabulary, when stationed at Holywood, County Down, was twice reported for neglect of duty, and was, on the recommendation of the District-Inspector, transferred to another station; whether a memorial was received by the County Inspector of Down, from magistrates of the district, asking for the return of Osborough to Holywood station; whether, on this memorial having been forwarded to Dublin Castle, the Inspector General directed that Osborough should be sent back to Holywood; and, whether this action of the Inspector General is in accordance with the practice always followed in such cases?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) Manchester, E.): I am informed that no complaint or report was made against this constable, but that the County Inspector had given an order which led to his transfer, and that the magistrates at Holywood asked that he should be sent back on the ground of his good conduct, local knowledge, and good service, and the County Inspector complied. The matter was in the discretion of the County Inspector, and was not referred to the Inspector General.

DUBLIN HOSPITAL COMMISSION—REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

Dr. KENNY (Cork, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Report and Minutes of Evidence of the Dublin Hospital Commission are yet ready; if not, will he explain the difference in their production, and when Members may expect them to be laid upon the Table?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): As I have stated, in reply to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) a few days ago, it is understood that the Report will shortly be submitted to the Lord Lieutenant. On its receipt the Irish Government will be in a position to consider whether it, as also the Minutes of Evidence, should be laid upon the Table.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): The right hon. Gentleman has not answered all the Questions. Can he explain the delay?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he presumed the delay had occurred with the Commission in connection with the writing of the Report; but he reminded the hon. Member that it by no means followed, because a Report was presented, that it should therefore be laid on the Table of the House. That was a matter entirely within the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant.

Dr. TANNER: Bah! It is not.

POST OFFICE—AUSTRALIAN MAIL CONTRACTS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Will the proposed Australian Mail Contracts, and the Correspondence relating thereto, be submitted to the Colonial Conference?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): My hon. Friend's Question appears to me to relate to a matter which is hardly within my jurisdiction. I may state, however, that I believe that the general question of postage with the Australian Colonies will be discussed by the Colonial Conference; and I understand the papers relating to the proposed Mail Contract will be laid before it.

THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES—QUEENSLAND RATES.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Has he any objection to lay upon the Table of the House the whole of the Correspondence showing the circumstance which led the Government of Queensland to charge the present rate of 4*d.* per letter from that Colony to England, and the refusal of the British Government to reciprocate but still to maintain the 6*d.* rate from England to Queensland; and, to lay upon the Table of the House Correspondence relating to the project of a post-card system to Australia?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The Correspondence referred to is rather voluminous, extending over a period of three years, and would be costly to print. The Question raised by the Queensland Government having been settled three years ago, I do not see that any advantage would result from printing the Correspondence asked for by the hon. Member. As regards the Question of post-cards to Australia, I have already answered the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool (Mr. Baden-Powell).

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—DERRY PETTY SESSIONS—CASE OF ROBERT WALLACE.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Mayor of Derry and three local magistrates, at the Derry Petty Sessions on Monday last, dismissed a summons, brought by the Great Northern Railway Company, Ireland, against Robert Wallace, a commercial traveller, charging him with intent to avoid paying his fare; and, whether the magistrates acted within their powers in so doing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The facts are substantially as stated in the Question. I understand that the case was to be re-heard to-day on a fresh summons in a different form.

Mr. O'HANLON: My Question has not been answered.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I suppose the hon. Gentleman refers to the last paragraph. Well, I do not think it any part of my duty to say whether magistrates have or have not exceeded their legal powers.

Mr. O'HANLON asked whose business it was then?

[No reply.]

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE—POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH BUSINESS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the question of the manufacture and supply of stamps, post-cards, &c., to the various Crown Colonies and Colonial Governments will be one of the subjects to be discussed at the Colonial Conference in connection with postal and telegraph business; whether he is aware that in the case of India the Controller of Stamps at Somerset House is now charged with the supervision of all such work for that Empire; and, whether he will inquire if this arrangement has proved economical to the Government of India?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): The question of the manufacture and supply of stamps and post-cards to the Crown Colonies and Colonial Governments is not proposed for discussion at the Colonial Conference. The Colonies, under responsible Governments, of course, make their own arrangements. With regard to the Crown Colonies, the Crown Agents have the advantage of all the assistance that can be given them by the Department of Her Majesty's Government, and it is believed that, by their arrangements, economy is secured. It is the case that the Controller of Stamps now superintends this work for India. Till last year, separate staffs were maintained for Imperial and Indian work respectfully at the manufactories. These have now been combined under the Controller of Stamps. The arrangement has only been in operation since October 1, 1886; but some economy has already resulted to India by reason of the reduction of staff which has been found possible.

QUARRIES BILL—REGULATION AND INSPECTION.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, When he intends to make his statement as to the views of the Government on the regulation and inspection of quarries, which he promised to make upon the second reading of the Quarries Bill?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, that in the present state of Public Business, the Government did not contemplate introducing a measure for the regulation and inspection of quarries.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (WALES) —PROGRESS SINCE 1870.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether he will include in the promised Report on Elementary Education in Wales, a review of the progress which has been made in Welsh education since the passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1870?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): Each general Report is designed to cover the period of two years that has elapsed since the last one was presented, and it would be impossible, with a due regard to the way in which an Inspector's time is occupied, to expect more.

Such a review as the hon. Member wishes for is to be found in the general Reports which have been issued from time to time since 1870.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman could not publish officially the facts and figures published unofficially by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), and which was supplied to him by the Education Department?

Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE said, he did not quite understand to what the hon. Member referred. His impression was that the facts and figures referred to were abstracted from the Report. If any further information could be obtained, he should be happy to furnish it to the hon. Member.

POLICE PROTECTION (IRELAND) — POLICE HUT IN DRUMCRUMAN, CO. LEITRIM.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a police hut has been erected in Drumcruman, Lower Drumreilly, County Leitrim, for the protection of two brothers named Gilheany, one of them a bailiff; whether, in connection with a murderous assault on a man named Flynn, the Gilheanys were sentenced some years ago to a term of nine months' imprisonment each; and, from what source will the cost of the hut and the extra police come?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The police authorities have found it necessary to afford the protection stated, the lives of the two men being in danger on account of their having taken an evicted farm. The cost of the protection is chargeable to the Constabulary Vote. It appears that between eight and nine years ago these men pleaded guilty to a charge of assault, and were each sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT YOUGHAL—INJURIES TO THE POLICE.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What was the character of the wounds stated to have been inflicted on the police during the recent police assault in Youghal, which resulted in the death of Hanlon; what was the technical medical description of each case; and was any man confined to the house while under treatment for the alleged wounds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): One constable had an incised wound over the left eye cutting into the bone; another, a severe contused wound on the left breast, over the region of the heart; and another, a very severe contused wound on the back of his head. The first man referred to was confined to the house while under medical treatment, but not the others. One of these, however, is reported to have suffered considerably from the effects of his wound, and the other to have been carried in an insensible condition to his bed room. There is no record as to the other members of the force who were struck with stones, as their cases were not of a serious nature.

Dr. TANNER: Might I ask how long was the man confined to the house?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot give the hon. Member the information; but I will make inquiries.

Dr. TANNER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the man was in Court next day?

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman allow an independent doctor to examine these men?

[No replies.]

PRIMARY EDUCATION (IRELAND) — THE ROYAL COMMISSION OF 1870.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government would take steps to give effect to the following unanimous recommendation of the Royal Commission on Primary Education (Ireland), under the Presidency of Earl Powis, which reports in 1870—

> "That when these have been in operation in any school district, or within any city or town for three years, two or more schools, of which one is under Protestant and one is under Roman Catholic management, having an average attendance of not less than twenty-five children, the National Board may, upon application from the patron or manager, adopt any such school, and award aid without requiring any regulation as to religion, other than a condition that no Catholic or Protestant, as the case may be, should be present at a school not of their own denomination during religious instruction?"

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The

Government have the subject of education in Ireland before them; but they cannot make fragmentary statements on matters of policy, or, in the present pressure of Public Business, come to hasty conclusions as to the proposals which successive Governments have left undecided for many years.

CROFTERS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL — EXTENSION TO LEASEHOLDERS.

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Have the Government, now that it is proposed to extend the Irish Land Act to leaseholders, any objection to the provisions in the Crofters Act Amendment (No. 2) Bill extending the Crofters Act to leaseholders?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The Crofters Act Amendment (No. 2) Bill seeks to extend the provisions of the existing Act to the whole of Scotland, and the Government are not prepared to adopt a proposal which was negatived on a Division by a large majority at the instance of the late Lord Advocate in the last Parliament.

Mr. ANDERSON: Are the Government willing to extend the existing area so far as to include leaseholders?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government do not see any reason for doing so.

POST OFFICE—FREE POSTAGE TO THE SOUTH KENSINGTON EXHIBITIONS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Under what authority the Treasury acted in allowing free postage to the managers and officials of various South Kensington Exhibitions?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The postage of Public Departments is necessarily carried at the public expense, and the correspondence of Commissions being considered official, the Treasury has given certain privileges of free postage to Royal Commissions appointed to conduct or assist certain Exhibitions.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: My Question has evidently not been made quite clear to the right hon. Gentleman. I wish to know under what authority the Treasury acted in allowing postage for the managers and officials of the Exhibition, not the Commission?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think the hon. Gentleman is mistaken. The free postage is not allowed to managers and officials for their private business, but to managers and officials of the Royal Commissions in the discharge of their public duty.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that all the Exhibitions were not held under or by Royal Commissions. I will repeat my Question in a more precise form. It is as to the Exhibitions held otherwise than under Royal Commissions in Kensington.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Most of those have been conducted under the authority of a Royal Commission.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Yes; but my Question has reference to those not under the authority of a Royal Commission.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have answered the Question of the hon. Member—["No, no!"]—so far as I know. There is authority in the case of Royal Commissions; and if it has been given in other cases it has been by mistake. My hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury refused authority in the case of one or two Exhibitions, because the request was preferred by a Commission, not a Royal Commission.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I shall repeat my Question in more precise terms to-morrow.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the circulars sent out with respect to the Imperial Institute have been posted gratis?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No Notice has been given of the Question, and I am not able to say. I am, however, informed that there is authority for granting free postage in this case.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—QUALIFICATION OF RESIDENT MAGISTRATES.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury a Question of which I have given him private Notice, Whether, having regard to the exceptional powers proposed to be conferred on Resident Magistrates in Ireland by the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill, he can give an undertaking that all Resident Magistrates who have not had a legal training will be removed, and their places filled by persons who have had legal training?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Under the provisions of the Bill as it stands, following the precedent set, I believe, by the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), one of the Magistrates must have a sufficiency of legal knowledge acting in each case. Therefore, I see no reason, under those circumstances, for adopting the very drastic suggestion of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether there are sufficient of these gentlemen in Ireland who have had legal training to supply one for each Court?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have reason to believe there is. If not, provision will be made to secure them.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): Who is to be the judge of the sufficiency?

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I must press the Question. What is the standard of sufficiency?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Does the hon. Gentleman realize that it is quite impossible for me to give a satisfactory answer to these Questions? The Government are responsible for every appointment they make.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—JURY-PACKING.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): May I ask the hon. and learned Member for Stockport, When he proposes to bring before the House his Notice of Motion—

> "To call attention to the present mode of framing the jury panel and selecting jurors in Ireland, and the reasons given for the same, and, in connection therewith, to the alleged jury-packing in past and pending cases."

Mr. GEDGE (Stockport): Provided I am able to do so, I propose to bring the matter forward to-night.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. BANNISTER, J.P., CORK.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland the following Question:—Whether it is a fact that Mr. Bannister, late of Belfast, manager of Goulding's Manure and Mineral Water Manufactories in Cork, has received the Commission of the Peace for the City of Cork; and, whether he is not publicly known as being an Orangeman and a member of the Primrose League and the Defence Union; and, whether the Government have had him appointed for the purpose of insulting the Catholic and National people of Cork?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Mr. Bannister has been appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the City of Cork, on the recommendation of Lord Bandon, Her Majesty's Lieutenant of the City of Cork. He appears to be a large shareholder in Goulding's Manure and Mineral Water Manufactories in Cork, to be closely connected with the commercial interests of Cork, and to be in every way fitted for the office conferred upon him. I am not aware whether he is connected with any of the Bodies specified in the Question of the hon. Member, nor do I feel called upon to make inquiry on the subject, as the fact of his connection therewith would not disqualify him from holding the Commission of the Peace.

Dr. TANNER: Arising out of this answer, might I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether Lord Bandon, the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Cork—not the City of Cork—is not also publicly known as being the chief of the Orange Society in Cork, and head of the Primrose League of the City of Cork, and also of the Defence Union?

[No reply.]

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): It may be for the convenience of the House that I should say that the Irish Land Bill introduced into the other House on Thursday is now in the Vote Office, where hon. Members interested in it can obtain copies.

PARLIAMENT — PRIVILEGE — REFLECTIONS ON THE SPEAKER OF THIS HOUSE.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have a Question to ask you, Mr. Speaker, on a point of Order, or rather on a question of Privilege. I wish to know, Sir, Whether your attention has been called to a speech purporting to have been delivered on Saturday last and reported in the papers to-day, by the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), and reflecting upon your conduct in the Chair. I have informed the hon. Member of my intention to put this Question to you, and I do not understand that he repudiates the substantial accuracy of the report of the speech. I further wish to know whether that speech, in your opinion, does not constitute a gross breach of the Privileges of this House? and I ask the Question, with a view of taking any further step that may be requisite, and, if necessary, of making a Motion on the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman has asked me whether my attention has been called to some words attributed to the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall. I this morning saw the speech in which the words referred to occur. The right hon. Gentleman asks me whether they constitute a breach of Privilege. Unquestionably it is a matter affecting Privilege; but, of course, whether it is a breach of Privilege or not rests with the House to decide. I may say that I wish, in referring to the matter which has been brought to the notice of the House, to pass over—as I can afford to do—any personal reflection intended to be conveyed by the hon. Member upon me; but the matter is graver than that. It is not a reflection upon me personally, but a reflection upon the House through the elected Speaker of this House. If any hon. Member thinks fit to impugn my conduct in the Chair, it is competent to him to bring my conduct under the notice of the House, and by a distinct Motion to challenge every act and every word of mine. I can understand that in the present heat of Party feeling when men's passions are roused—I can understand words escaping hon. Gentlemen which in their cooler moments they would repudiate. I hope that the words of the hon. Member were not premeditated or deliberate. I can only say that it is my wish and it is my duty in this Chair to allay Party feeling, if I can—[*An Ironical Cheer from a Home Rule Member*]—Yes, if I can — notwithstanding the sneer of the hon. Member—to allay any heat or passion in this House. But it is a strange thing, indeed, that within a few weeks after I have been invested with an absolute discretion by a Standing Order passed by the House of Commons, as to whether I shall give or withhold my assent to a Motion for closing debate—it is, I say, a strange, and I hope it is an unprecedented thing, that an hon. Member of this House should think it becoming in him to charge me in the action I took with having thereby become a partizan of either one side of the House or the other. I shall say no more to the House of Commons, because I wish, if possible, to calm down any personal feeling. I will only add this, that I am content to leave my conduct in this Chair to the judgment of every fair and right-minded and honourable man.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Mr. Speaker, I understand, Sir, that with regard to what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and from yourself, I shall be entitled to say a few words as to my own conduct in this matter by way of personal explanation. In the first place, I wish to say at the outset that I received no information whatever that this question would be raised until I entered this House, and having come up from the country this afternoon I have seen no Report whatever of what I am asserted to have said. I do not rest so much on that; but I merely mention the circumstance to the House. And following on that, I desire to say that if what I am reported in *The Times* and other newspapers to have said should, on examination, be found accurately to represent what I did say, and if it does appear that I in any way expressed myself in a manner reflecting on you, Sir, as the occupant of the Chair, I should at once most humbly and most fully express my regret for having unintentionally done so in speaking on a subject on which, as an elector of the country, as well as a Representative, I believe myself entitled to comment. Having said so much, I wish to state what the position was that I endeavoured to take up, and how I endeavoured to guard myself against saying anything that would be invidious or unbecoming in me. I have regarded this as a grave Constitutional question. It has been our contention throughout the recent prolonged debates on the Closure Rule, that the closure should be used only in the case of Obstruction, and I may add that Her Majesty's Government pledged themselves that it should be used only in such cases. I endeavoured to express my view, at any rate, that on Friday evening no case of Obstruction had, in my judgment, really arisen. And it does appear to me that when the adjournment was demanded, not by a mere handful of Members, but by the oldest and most respected Member in the House, and the principal Leader of the House after the right hon. Gentleman opposite, backed up by the whole of his Party, and the whole of the Party of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell)—it does appear to me that there was *primâ facie* evidence of no Obstruction such as this Closure Rule was intended to meet. I brought the matter before the Gentlemen I was addressing on Saturday evening in order to raise the Constitutional question as to whether we were right in our contention, or whether we were wrong. If our interpretation of the Rule is a right one—namely, that it should only be used against Obstruction, and not when the whole of one of the great Parties in the country is at issue with the Party in power, then I contend that I was fairly entitled to comment at that meeting upon so grave a Constitutional question. If, on the contrary, the interpretation we on this side of the House have, without exception, placed upon the Rule is a wrong interpretation, and if the Rule is contrary to the pledges of the right hon. Gentleman opposite to apply to the entire Liberal Party, and if not upon the initiative of the Speaker, but of the First Lord of the Treasury, it is to be used as the means of forcing an objectionable Bill through the House which is subversive of the Constitutional rights of one great section of the United Kingdom—I thought it was best to bring out the fact so that we might be informed of it, and be in a position to ask Her Majesty's Government for a further opportunity of discussing such a grave and important point. In the next place, it was my object to point out that there was a danger as repeatedly insisted upon by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, that the interpretation placed—I do not mean by you, Sir, nor by the Members of this House, but by the country—on the application of the Rule would be inevitably such as would bring your conduct into question. That is the feeling that we on this side feared would arise from the application of the Rule. I do not say it would be right to indulge in any such feeling; I am not myself indulging in any such feeling; as I have said before, I was anxious when I made my speech on Saturday, to guard myself against falling into such an error. If I have done so, I have already, I hope, amply withdrawn any objectionable words that I may have used. But I am only asking the House to consider that it was my object in that speech to bring out the danger that had, in my opinion, actually arisen, and that had been forecast by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone); and it seemed to me that the fact that any such feeling should be suggested even was a proof of the wisdom of the right hon. Gentleman's argument against the Rule in the form in which it was brought forward and passed by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I believe, Sir, that the Party opposite coincide with us in our desire that nothing should be done to weaken or lessen in any way the authority of the Chair, or to reflect upon that authority. And, again, I say that if at a public meeting, in the heat of the moment, I said anything that could possibly convey any erroneous impression that I intended to reflect on your conduct and authority in the Chair, I can only say I am sorry for it, for I had no such intention. I spoke on Saturday with a full consciousness of the gravity of the situation. I felt it to be my duty to express my opinion, however inadequately, on the present position of affairs; and with the explanation which I have now offered, I humbly submit that I did not transgress my duty in saying what I did say on such a grave Constitutional crisis.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I understand that the hon. Gentleman has unequivocably withdrawn, Sir, any imputations on your conduct in the Chair. He has, notwithstanding, made some reflection upon me as to my conduct as Leader of the House; but I do not think that I should consult the convenience of the House if I were to enter into a debate on the course which I thought it my duty to pursue on that occasion. I have only risen, Sir——

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): What is the Question before the House? [*Cries of* "Order!" *and* "Name!"]

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I only rise, Sir, for the purpose of venturing to assure you of the complete and absolute confidence which the House reposes in your perfect impartiality, and I am sure that the view is shared by hon. Gentlemen opposite—a view which has been so unanimously expressed on this side of the House. It cannot be denied that you have executed the duty—the important and responsible duty—imposed upon you by the Orders of this House—[*Cries of* "Order!" *from the Home Rule Benches.*]—in a way which has secured the confidence and respect of the House.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I have no desire, as I have no right, to prolong this very painful incident. I only wish to say that when I read the language ascribed to my hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) in the newspapers this morning, I felt a very profound regret. But as to that, it is unnecessary to add another word, because my hon. Friend has made a very complete and satisfactory withdrawal, and has taken from those words any of the animus which at the first reading they may have seemed to possess. With reference to the language which you yourself have used on this occasion, it is not necessary for me to say that we, on this side of the House, should deprecate as warmly as hon. Gentlemen opposite any words used or anything done to show our want of faith in your absolute impartiality, and in your desire, which we cannot doubt for one moment, to use your great authority and position, as you have said, to allay Party heat, and rather to calm down passions than to inflame them. I hope, Sir, that this unfortunate incident may now be allowed to close.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I rise to Order.

Mr. CHAPLIN also rose. [*Cries of* "Johnston!"] The right hon. Gentleman said: I merely rise to say, Sir, that after the explanation of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall, I do not, of course, propose to make any Motion on the question which I brought under the notice of the House.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I wish merely to say that we, on this side of the House, patiently listened to all the hon. Member for Camborne has had to say on this matter; but that, owing to the interruptions of the hon. and learned Member for Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) and other Members below the Gangway on that side of the House, when the First Lord of the Treasury was speaking, we were not able to hear what fell from the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can inform the House whether, before he moved the closure on Saturday morning, he had previously obtained the sanction of the Chair. [*Loud cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I do not know whether it is fitting that I should reply to such a question—[*Cries of* "No, no!" "Do not answer!" *and interruption*]—but I wish to say that I did not.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): There is another question, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this incident which I venture to put to you, because it is of great importance. It is whether a Motion can be made for the closure when no Motion is before the House, because, so far as I can understand the proceedings on Friday night, you had not put the Motion when the right. hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury rose and moved that the debate should come to a close? I only ask for information.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to inform the hon. Member that the Main Question was always before the House.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The Amendment was before the House. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

HARBOUR LOANS.—RESOLUTION.

Mr. R. W. DUFF (Banffshire), in rising to call attention to the administration of harbour loans under the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act of 1861 by the Public Works Loan Commissioners; and to move—

> "That in the opinion of this House, the Board of Trade should decide on the policy of the works to be undertaken, and that the functions of the Loan Commissioners should be limited to deciding on the sufficiency of the security offered by applicants for loans,"

said, he disclaimed any intention of attacking the general policy of the Public Works Loan Commissioners—a body of gentlemen who, in the discharge of a delicate and onerous duty, had gratuitously rendered valuable service to the country. But he wished to relieve the Commissioners of certain duties which the Board of Trade had greater facilities for dealing with. He believed this opinion was entertained by some of the Commissioners themselves. In 1858 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the harbour question. The Commissioners recommended an expenditure of £2,000,000 on various harbours throughout the country. In the Session of 1860 the late Mr. Lindsay, then Member for Sunderland, carried a Motion by a majority of 17 against Lord Palmerston's Government, declaring that effect should be given to the Commissioners' Report. The Government put the question off till the following Session. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was not surprising that so jealous a guardian of the public purse should have looked with apprehension on the proposal to spend £2,000,000 on harbour works, and should have endeavoured to meet the views of the House with some counter proposal. The Government, accordingly, introduced the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act. The late Mr. Milner Gibson, then President of the Board of Trade, in introducing that measure, promised, on behalf of the Government, that £360,000 per annum should be paid to the Loan Commissioners to be lent at 3¼ per cent for harbour purposes, interest and capital being repayable in 50 years. The House would therefore see that a sort of bargain was struck between the Government of the day on the one hand, and the representatives of harbour interests on the other. The Government of 1879, by authorizing the Treasury to raise the rate of interest 1 per cent, broke the compact entered into in 1861. The Public Works Loan Commissioners by the interpretation they had put on the Act had frustrated its intention. For some few years after the passing of the Act, up to about the year 1865, matters went comparatively smoothly in its working, but later on there came a serious difference of opinion between the Loan Commissioners and the Board of Trade as to the construction of the Act. Sir Thomas Farrer laid down the principle he now urged in a letter of October, 1865. Addressing the Loan Commissioners, he said—

> "The Board of Trade are distinctly of opinion that the decision upon the policy of each grant should rest solely and entirely with them, and that the decision upon the sufficiency of the security should rest solely and entirely with the Loan Commissioners. This, as the Board believes, was the intention of the Government and of the Legislature, and any other course can in their opinion only lead to confusion."

This opinion, he believed, laid down the only sound policy, and when it was departed from they got into endless confusion. In order to illustrate this he referred to two decisions of the Commissioners. They were applied to for a loan by the Hollywood Pier Company. In their answer, March 4, 1865, the Commissioners say—

> "That the Legislature in making provision for the construction and improvement of harbours by loans of money at a low rate of interest and with a period of 50 years for their repayment, had in view national purposes of trade and general utility and did not contemplate advances from the public funds to promote promenades or pleasure traffic."

The Commissioners had previously refused a loan for the Brighton pier. He thought in this decision they were perfectly right. For Brighton Pier, even when enhanced by a band, was scarcely the "harbour of refuge" contemplated by the Act. But the House would observe that the Commissioners, in their reply to the Hollywood Pier Company, laid down a policy. The Act was intended "to benefit trade." How did they adhere to it? An application was made for a loan for Burntisland. In their reply in August, 1871, the Commissioners said—

> "The Board do not feel justified in making for purposes of trade, advances of public money under the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act at an interest of 3¼ per cent, and with a period of 50 years for repayment. They decline, therefore, in the exercise of the discretion invested in them by the Act of Parliament by which these principles are regulated, to entertain applications for loans

> under the Harbour Act, except in the cases in which the works proposed to be executed are shown to be calculated to serve for refuge or shelter, or otherwise conducive to the safety of life and property."

Burntisland was refused a loan because it promoted trade interests only, and Hollywood Pier because it did not promote trade interests. But then in the Burntisland case we were told that "refuge and shelter" were the objects of the Commissioners; but if that was so, how did we come to find £50,000 lent to Falmouth Docks, financially one of the worst loans the Commissioners made? Did the Falmouth Docks afford more shelter than a harbour would at Burntisland? The House would see that the principles successively laid down by the Commissioners involved them, as the Board of Trade said they would, in hopeless confusion. The term "shipping purposes" used in the Act would have justified loans in all these cases, provided always the security were good. But the fact was that the Act of 1861 had of recent years, in consequence of the interpretation put upon it by the Loan Commissioners, ceased to be operative. This was the opinion of several witnesses before the Harbour Committee, and it was supported by statistics in their report. Sir Thomas Farrer, in reply to a question by the chairman, said—

> "I can have no doubt that the construction that the Public Works Loan Commissioners have put upon the Act has limited the real intention of the framers of the Act and the intention of Parliament in passing the Act."

The return showing the operation of the Act indicated how it had gradually ceased to be operative, and the time when it so ceased would be found to be coincident with the period when the Commissioners took all power out of the hands of the Board of Trade. The Act could scarcely be said to have come into full operation till 1864. In the five years 1864 to 1868 inclusive, the average grants per annum were £223,352. In the next 10 years the annual grants fell to an average of £98,264. During the last five years, by the combined policy of the Loan Commissioners and the Government of 1879 raising the rate of interest, the amount granted for home ports, exclusive of Colombo, was reduced to an average of £53,500. He was not blaming the Commissioners for the higher rate of interest; that was arranged by the Government of 1879; but the falling off in the amounts lent dated from about the year 1869, when the Board of Trade practically ceased to have any control over the transactions. That this was the case was brought out by a Question put by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Salt), himself a Loan Commissioner. The hon. Member inquired—

> "Is it not a pity that the public should not have the benefit of the comments of the Board of Trade?"

Sir Thomas Farrer replied—

> "When people have taken a great deal of trouble to come to a decision, and they find that their decisions are treated as so much waste paper, they are apt to give it up."

He believed that the influence exercised by the Board of Trade was a beneficial one in carrying out the intentions of the Act. If the House adopted this Motion, action would have to be taken to restore the functions which the Board of Trade claimed and exercised when the Act was first put into operation. So much money had been wasted in harbour construction that he could readily understand the existence of a feeling that all expenditure in such works was necessarily attended with great risk and likely to be unremunerative. No doubt, when they remembered the million and a-quarter thrown into the sea at Alderney, the failure at Jersey, the mismanagement at Wick, Anstruther, Dunbar, and other places—it was not wonderful that the House should approach the subject with a somewhat prejudiced mind. But the scandalous waste at Alderney and the mismanagement at other places did not take place under the system of loans he was advocating. Where the people had taken the initiative and borrowed money on harbour dues and other securities, where they had managed their own local affairs, in fact, where they had enjoyed "Home Rule" in this harbour question, the country had not lost a sixpence. In the cases of Anstruther and Dunbar there were special grants; they did not come under the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act. Wick was altogether exceptional. The people there wanted to spend some £40,000 on a harbour, but the plans were over-ruled by the Government of the day, who induced the British Fishery Society to contribute for a work to cost £120,000. The harbour was a complete failure. The Wick Harbour Commissioners accurately stated the case when they said—

> "The Government is not a mere creditor, but a creditor whose action directly led the debtor into the path of ruin."

The total amount advanced under the Act up to 1883 was £2,561,849. The interest received on this was £897,381. The interest due at 3 per cent—the rate the State can borrow money at—would be £822,428. There was an actual gain of £74,953. But against this must be put £33,992 written off for the harbour at the Isle of Man, and £61,290 in arrears. If, therefore, only £20,000 of the arrears was received—and he believed a greater amount was good—there would have been no loss to the State. The other transactions of the Commissioners showed where the loss arose that had caused the additional rate to be put on harbour loans. By the last Report the Commissioners had lent in all £54,088,000. Of this £1,852,723 had been written off; most of it appeared in what was called the closed account; and £433,853 was in arrears. The losses had arisen from £1,250,000 in Irish workhouses, £150,000 in the Thames Tunnel, in a total amount of £250,000, £100,000 in Battersea Park, and £84,000 in roads, in a total of £666,000. Except in the case of the Isle of Man, there had been nothing written off the £2,500,000 borrowed under the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act. Yet the compact of 1861 had been broken to pay for the bad debts he had alluded to. A study of the Return appeared to present some startling anomalies. There were many poor communities, fishing villages, where the height of the ambition of the people was to secure a harbour. They would toil and save for this object; a common fund was started; every house, where it was possible, aye, and every boat, would be mortgaged as a security for a harbour loan, and when, by every possible sacrifice, they had got together something like a security, they were to be charged 4¼ per cent for a loan for 40 years, while here, in the centre of the richest city in the world, £150,000 was to be written off a loan of £250,000 on the Thames Tunnel, and £100,000 on the loan for Battersea Park. The loan to the Thames Tunnel was made some time ago, but Battersea Park was a comparatively modern affair; but both transactions appeared in the accounts, and the high rate now charged for harbour loans was in consequence of the bad debts which the Commissioners, acting under instructions from the Treasury, had contracted. The Act of 1875 had put a stop to such transactions in the future. Those who represented harbour interests were entitled to say that if the Act had hitherto worked so well, that was the best possible reason for extending its operation. Those who believed, as he believed, that harbours, on properly constructed plans, were as much reproductive expenditure as money spent in sanitary purposes or in educational purposes, or any object for which loans were granted, were entitled, looking to the special obligation of Parliament, to claim that loans should be administered on more liberal principles than they were. Up to the year 1861, for the 10 preceding years we spent £300,000 on harbour improvements. Now we were lending £53,000 a-year, and spending some £20,000 a-year at Dover and Peterhead, which might possibly give the next generation two more harbours. The Harbour Committee told them that during the last 20 years in France the State contribution to harbours had been £11,000,000, and other countries had been spending larger sums than we had in developing their trade by harbour construction. The amount of loans granted between 1861 and 1883 was £2,561,849. The amount refused was £2,407,559, so that about half the sum applied for had been refused. He believed that under the system he was advocating the Board of Trade would have granted a far larger proportion of the amount asked for, and the Act of 1861, as explained by Mr. Milner-Gibson, would have had some chance of being carried out. He now wished to refer to another grievance complained of in administering those loans. The Commissioners declined to advance money for harbour works to joint stock companies, and to private individuals. There was nothing in the Act to justify such a refusal. It was an arbitrary decision come to by the Commissioners. If a company or an individual was prepared to give ample security, he did not understand on what grounds they were to be prevented borrowing money for a useful public purpose. The Harbour Committee, in their Report, protested strongly against this limitation, as being an evasion of the Act. Then, the Commisioners had no proper means of seeing that the money which they lent was properly expended. The original plans might be submitted to an engineer, but during the progress of the works the Commissioners had no guarantee that the plans might not be altered. They had no system of inspection. They had heard something about an inspecting engineer in the evidence before the Committee; but when he looked into the Estimates, he found only £100 a-year charged under the head of an engineer. If the Commissioners could for that sum get a competent gentleman to inspect, not only the plans, but the progress of about 20 works going on over the country, and costing some £53,410 a-year, they were certainly to be congratulated on their economical arrangements. The fact was, he believed, that there was no inspection at all after the money was lent, and it was quite possible to obtain the money for one purpose and to spend it on an entirely different one. But he proposed that they should transfer the policy of determining on the works to the Board of Trade, where they had a Harbour Department more competent, he believed, than the Loan Commissioners were to decide on the original plans, and with full power under a special Act of inspecting the works under construction. There was only one other point to which he should allude. They were told in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech that they were to have a Local Government Act. He feared, however, that it was rather a long way off; but when it was introduced he hoped it would contain provisions enabling districts to assess themselves for harbour loans, and that the Bill for Scotland would not overlook the recommendations of Sheriff Guthrie Smith contained in the Fishery Board's Report, that special facilities be given to fishermen to obtain feus in cases where they had already built their houses on land not belonging to themselves, thus enabling them to give collateral security. The learned gentleman to whom he had referred estimated that in his county alone (Banffshire) £58,000 which might be used as collateral security for harbour loans was not available, because fishermen had no legal title to their houses. If time permitted he would prove to the House that the Act of 1861, while fairly administered, was productive of great benefit, not only in carrying out such extensive works as had been undertaken on the Tyne, at Leith, Aberdeen, Fraserburgh, Belfast, and other flourishing seaports, but also in the case of numerous fishing villages. On this account he regretted that the compact of 1861 had been broken, and that the Act had become almost inoperative. All he would further say was, that if it should be the deliberate intention of Parliament not to grant any assistance whatever to harbours, to pay no attention to the recommendations of endless Commissions and Committees, to abolish the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act, to say that England, the greatest maritime country in the world—was to be the only nation to give no State assistance to harbours, and that they were to depend entirely on private enterprise, it would be more honest to say so than to pretend to give assistance by a system of loans, when they at the same time made the conditions of those loans so onerous that scarcely anyone would take advantage of them. But he could not believe that such a course would commend itself to the House. He believed, on the other hand, that the general desire was to see the extension of a system which up to the present had cost the country nothing, and which, at a comparatively small risk to the taxpayers of the country, had contributed largely to the saving of life and to the benefit of trade. He moved the Resolution standing in his name.

Mr. SPEAKER retired, and the Clerk at the Table informed the House that Mr. Speaker had been compelled by indisposition to leave the House, and was unable to resume the Chair:—

Whereupon Mr. COURTNEY, the Chairman of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

MR. E. W. BECKETT (Yorkshire, N.R., Whitby) said, he begged to second the Motion of the hon. Member for Banffshire. There were three reasons why the Government should not refuse to accept it. In the first place, hon. Members sitting on both sides of the House were in favour of it, and it was not often that Ministers got the chance of meeting the wishes both of their opponents and supporters; in the second place, the Motion did not contain or imply any criticism on any portion of the Estimates; and in the third place, it did not ask the Government either to reduce or to increase their expenditure by one penny. He did not think that, recommended by these arguments, it would encounter any serious obstacle or hostility. The Motion might be objected to on the ground that it laid down a principle, and that it was dangerous and inexpedient for the House of Commons to lay down principles. But surely the House ought not to legislate without principles, and in the present case a clear enunciation of a principle was particularly required, not for the guidance of the House, but for the guidance of a Body emanating from and responsible to the House. Such a Body ought to have an accurate comprehension of the lines on which it was expected to act, and it could only have this comprehension if the instructions given to it were full, plain, and positive. In fairness to them, and in order to avoid misconceptions in the future, it would be well if the present Motion were passed. With regard to the issue of harbour loans the functions of the Commissioners and those of the Board of Trade so overlapped each other and stood in such a relation to each other that, as Falstaff said, "they are neither fish nor flesh, and no man knows where to have them." He had no complaint to make of the Board of Trade nor of the Loan Commissioners in their individual capacity, for he had found both civil, courteous, and ready to listen to what he had to say, and as accommodating as money-lenders could be expected to be; but owing to their respective duties being undefined it was easy for them to refuse an application by taking refuge behind each other, and throwing the responsibility of the refusal on each other's shoulders. The Board of Trade might say that they would be delighted to sanction the policy if the Loan Commissioners would find the money, and the Loan Commissioners would say they would be delighted to find the money if the Board of Trade would sanction the policy. The result was that the issue of loans that were urgently required were very often refused. They did business on the principle of Spenlow and Jorkins—"The hand and heart of the good angel Spenlow would always be open but for the restraining demon Jorkins." Thus the game went on—

> "And enterprizes of great pith and moment,
> With this regard their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action."

It was obvious that Parliament must have intended that there should be a broad line of demarcation between the functions that each of those Bodies had to fulfil, and the Motion only asked the House to put a legal stamp and form on those obvious intentions of Parliament. If the Loan Commissioners were allowed any voice in pronouncing on the policy of a loan, the result was that they were rendered less capable of deciding with a perfectly unprejudiced and unclouded mind upon the character of the security offered for a loan, as the opinion of the policy would insensibly but undoubtedly influence their opinion of the security. It was extremely necessary that the functions of deciding the policy and the loans should be kept distinct. Those who, like himself, anxiously desired to see harbours of refuge constructed at various points along the coast, or at all events the existing harbours enlarged and improved, were told last year that for the fulfilment of their wishes they must look to local enterprise and local capital, assisted by grants from the Loans Commissioners. If anything was ever to be done in this direction—and much was urgently needed for the protection of life and property, and for the protection of our sailors and our fishermen — the Loan Commissioners must be easy of access, not grudging of their money or hard in their terms. It was because he believed that this Motion, if carried, would open the door to deserving applicants, and by removing one of the chief impediments to harbour loans would in some measure facilitate their issue, that he ventured most earnestly to press for its adoption by the House.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the Board of Trade should decide on the policy of the works to be undertaken, and that the functions of the Loan Commissioners should be limited to deciding on the sufficiency of the security offered by applicants for loans."—(*Mr. Duff.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton) said, that recently two legal decisions had been given which greatly increased the difficulty of obtaining loans for harbour works. The decisions to which he referred sprang out of occurrences at Falmouth and Dartmouth respectively. In each case an accident occurred to a ship, and the Harbour Commissioners were mulcted in damages, with the result that their affairs passed into the hands of Receivers of the Court of Chancery. Before these decisions it was believed that Harbour Commissioners were not liable for inadvertent damage to ships, and that the loans made to them were fully secured. These decisions, however, showed that they were equally liable with Railway Companies and carriers. In these circumstances, if the law were not altered, it was very unlikely that private individuals or the Public Works Loan Commissioners would in the future be ready to advance money for harbour works. He therefore hoped that a Bill would be introduced for the purpose of rendering all loans to Harbour Commissioners perfectly safe.

Mr. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow) expressed great regret that the recommendations of the Select Committee on the construction of harbours, of which he was a Member, had not been carried out. As the law stood, the Loan Fund Commissioners had the exclusive power of granting or refusing loans. The result was that localities in which it was most desirable to build harbours were often unable to obtain the necessary money. At Waterford, for example, a determination was come to eight or nine years ago to build a much-wanted harbour, and good security was offered to the Loan Fund Commissioners; but they refused to advance the money, and consequently the work could not be undertaken. He held that the question of the desirability or undesirability of erecting a harbour in a particular locality ought for the future to be decided by the Board of Trade, and that the powers of the Loan Commissioners ought to be restricted to that of determining whether the security offered for an advance was or was not sufficiently good.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, he had great pleasure in supporting the Motion made by the hon. Member for Banff (Mr. R. W. Duff). It had fallen to his (Sir Joseph Pease's) lot to have a good deal to do with harbour loans by way of communication between the Harbour Authorities and the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Since the year 1861, when the Act was passed for granting such loans at a fixed rate of interest, upwards of £2,000,000 of money had been spent on the North-East Coast of England, with which he was well acquainted. The Government had no doubt wasted money in the localities which the hon. Member had pointed out. The Royal Commission of 1859 had reported recommending grants of money to certain harbours on the coast of the United Kingdom. The Act of 1861 was intended to over-ride that Report by granting loans at 3¼ per cent to existing harbours. Instead of money being advanced by the Public Loan Commissioners at 3¼ per cent, as was done in connection with the first Tyne and Tees loans, the Act was ignored altogether, and as much as 4 per cent, and 4¼ per cent in some poor districts, were charged on the loans granted by the Public Works Commissioners. This meant that the interest charged by the Loan Commissioners was now more than could be borrowed from the public; and further expense at this high rate cast a burden upon the industry of the localities which undertook to pay such heavy rates of interest for loans for harbour works. The promise made by Mr. Milner Gibson in 1861 had been ignored, and the Public Works Loan Commissioners had taken advantage of the wording of the Act to impose the excessive terms. He (Sir Joseph Pease) had stated his opinion that the original intention was that public money should be lent cheaply for deepening harbours, and constructing fishery harbours on the coast of an essentially maritime country. The Loan Commissioners, he understood, took advantage of the word "may" in the Act of 1861, and they set up a claim to judge of the policy of the works for which the loans were sought. Then there was another point to which he desired especially to call the particular attention of the House. This was that when the Public Works Loan Commissioners took in hand the examination of the work and the proposals of the harbour authorities, they did not deal liberally with questions submitted to them. In the

Tees case, where they had spent the sum of £1,000,000 sterling, they had borrowed three-fourths of that sum from the public; but when they went to the Public Loan Commissioners for their last loan they were told that the security they offered, which was the same as that on which a previous loan had been granted, was not sufficiently good. He and those with whom he acted was sure that the security was perfectly good, for they knew that, independently of their tolls, for every foot of water they could get in the harbour they were promoting, they should get larger ships and more foreign trade; and they thought that they had given ample proof of this to the Loan Commission. They showed a toll tariff which would give a large surplus; but the Public Loan Commissioners refused to grant them a loan. Thereupon they called the attention of the late Lord Iddesleigh, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the subject, and to the wording of the Act of 1861, and showed him that there was reason to believe that the Public Works Loan Commissioners were not doing their duty to the harbour authorities. The noble Earl—then Sir Stafford Northcote—was good enough to take the matter into consideration. Papers were sent for, submitted to, and considered by him, and the result was that they got their loan. But if in the case of the Tees, where there was a large trade, they had been able to provide for themselves by obtaining their loans in a great measure from the public, as well as to meet the requirements of the Public Works Loan Commissioners, it did not by any means necessarily follow that in the case of many of the smaller harbours these promoters could provide for themselves in the same way or to the same extent. Now, if there was one thing which we ought as a nation to do, it was to promote the establishment of harbours, which would be useful to trade in times of peace, and would be conducive to the saving of life; while in times of war they would be of the highest national advantage. If, therefore, anything could be done to promote the object which he had referred to, and to enable the Public Works Loan Commissioners to see that it was their duty to the State to take the most favourable view of the application of the harbour authorities, he thought it would be a most desirable thing. He believed that this object would be promoted if the Board of Trade were intrusted with the duty of judging of the merits of the proposed works. In that case he thought they would have a tribunal better fitted than the Public Works Loan Commissioners to deal with local wants, and to meet the wants especially of the communities which were least able to borrow from the public. For these reasons he should support the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Banffshire.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.) said, he felt it his duty at once to state, in answer to the complaint that the rate of interest had been raised 1 per cent, that in the opinion of the Treasury, which was at least as well able to judge of the question as any outside authority, the country owed a great debt of gratitude to the Public Works Loan Commissioners for the admirable manner in which they had discharged their difficult and important duties. They had executed the trust committed to them in a manner which had saved the country great loss, although they had not been able to escape loss altogether. An account had been taken and a calculation made, which showed that on the rates charged there had been a loss of interest on loans to harbour authorities amounting to £8,000. Out of 50 loans granted several would not be repaid. The rates now enforced were sanctioned by the Treasury Minute of the 18th of June, 1885. There were two scales, according as collateral security for the repayment of the loan was or was not offered. When no such security was offered the interest was 3½ per cent, when the loan was repayable in 30 years, 3¾ per cent, when the period of repayment exceeded 30 and did not exceed 40 years, and 4 per cent for periods from 40 to 50 years. When collateral security was offered, the rate was ¼ per cent lower in each case. Those rates could not be considered extravagant. He agreed that loans should be granted if possible when security was offered, but he did not imagine that his hon. Friend would desire that the Public Works Loan Commissioners should grant loans which were really grants in disguise. It was no doubt desirable that local efforts should be aided wherever it was probable that no loss would be sustained or that there was a general concurrence of opinion. But it would be equally conceded on all hands that too free and lavish a use of State aid tended to discourage private enterprise and to cripple local effort. So far as the Government were concerned they desired to assist local effort in the most beneficent and efficient manner possible. It must, however, be remembered that the Loan Commissioners exercised their authority under an Act of Parliament, and the obvious duty of anybody in such circumstances was not to consider whether the Act of Parliament was right or wrong, but to confine themselves rigidly to the duties prescribed by that Act of Parliament. The Loan Commissioners, in claiming the right to decide as to the policy of these loans, had been acting under their strict legal powers. It was expressly provided that in granting loans they should have regard to the sufficiency of the security for their repayment, and should exercise their judgment whether the work proposed would be so beneficial to the community affected as to justify the loan which was asked. The hon. Member for Banff (Mr. R. W. Duff) had pointed out that the Committee recommended that £350,000 should be set aside annually for these loans. The whole of that sum had not been expended. But Parliament would be unwise in fixing a definite sum like that to be spent each year, because the operation of such a rule would be to multiply the number of applicants, and it would also be necessary either to deal with applications according to priority or to the adequacy of the security offered. The proposed limit of £350,000 had not been reached, not from any desire on the part of the Treasury to impose undue limits, but because the applications had not complied with the requirements imposed. The hon. Member for Banff had referred to the differences which had arisen between the Board of Trade and the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and he had endeavoured to show that the Commissioners were entitled to a voice as to the policy of the loans, as well as to the security which was offered for their repayment. He was glad to say, however, that his hon. Friend the Secretary to the Board of Trade would be able to inform the House that the negotiations which had been in progress would probably be successful. Therefore, he need not at present go further than that. The hon. Member also referred to the question of waste, and recommended that a certain proportion of the works should be undertaken by the Board of Trade, because the Board had at their disposal engineers who could inspect the works. But the hon. Gentleman himself supplied the soundest argument against Government interference. The hon. Member referred to the case of Wick, and showed conclusively that there the interference of the Government engineers led to a larger outlay than would otherwise have been incurred.

Mr. R. W. DUFF said, he did not mean that the engineers of the Board of Trade should lay down the works, but that there were works going on, as in the case of the Forth Bridge for instance, to which they might be sent for the purposes of inspection. He did not mean that they should be answerable for the works. The Loan Commissioners had no engineers, whereas the Board of Trade had engineers whom they could send out to see that works were carried out according to the plans.

Mr. JACKSON said, the hon. Member had referred to the case of the Forth Bridge. It was true that the Government sent engineers to inspect the works. It ought, however, to be borne in mind that that bridge was built by money advanced, not by the Government, but by the public. In that case the Board of Trade inspection was not for the purpose of seeing that the work was carried out in a particular way, but it was limited entirely to the exercise of the power of the Board to see that the safety of the public was secured. It would be most dangerous for the Government, either through the Board of Trade or any other Body, to make themselves responsible. If they sent an engineer, what would he have to do? Was he to exercise any control over the design or the construction, or was he to make any recommendations, or to insist on certain works being carried out in a particular way? If so the Government engineer, and through him the Government, would immediately be made responsible for carrying out the works. Therefore he would ask the House to hesitate before they adopted a plan of too much Government interference. Then the hon. Member alluded to the enormous sum of money expended by France upon harbours; but he did not think that experience of Government outlay and Government responsibility in connection with public works in France furnished an example which it would be desirable for this country to follow. It was true that a great effort was made in France some years ago to induce the Government to aid the workpeople by finding them employment and carrying out public works. Last year it appeared that the sum of 1,000,000 francs was spent on harbour works. Opinion was greatly divided, however, as to whether the ports had derived any advantage from this expenditure. The expenditure was made on the condition that the dues should be increased, the result being that in many of the ports the trade had fallen off. The hon. Member likewise urged that the Government ought to facilitate as far as they could assistance to Local Authorities by giving them larger powers to offer as security their local rates. On this point the Government were entirely at one with the hon. Member. They would raise no objection, and they thought it was extremely desirable to extend the powers which these Local Authorities at present possessed. Reference had been also made to the saving of life. Now, it was a curious fact that the evidence of the Wreck Chart went to show that the provision of harbours would not necessarily, to a very large extent, prevent the loss of life which occurred at present. The largest loss of life took place either on coasts or in districts which were already provided with harbours, or in districts where no proposal had been made to establish harbours. He did not wish to lay too much stress upon that, and he only mentioned the circumstance in order to prevent misconception. If the Government were not able to go the whole length of the hon. Member, it was not from any disregard of the desirability of adopting every means to diminish the loss of life which took place. The negotiations that had been in progress would, he believed, find a happy medium by which the policy and the conduct of the Board of Trade and the Public Works Loan Commissioners would be brought into harmony. He had reason to hope that his hon. Friend (Mr. R. W. Duff) would agree that if such a solution could be found it would be much better in the interests he so well advocated than an arbitrary change by means of some violent action on the part of Parliament. He hoped, if the Secretary to the Board of Trade was able to inform the House that the recommendations of the Treasury had been accepted by the Board and by the Commissioners, that the hon. Member would feel that he had obtained all he required and would not think it necessary to press his Motion.

MR. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) said, that difficulties which appeared to him insurmountable were placed in the way of Local Authorities desiring to obtain loans from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. What was perfectly clear to his mind was that the Public Works Loan Commissions had proved to be a complete failure—and that there must be entirely new legislation with regard to them. There must be complete reorganization, and a new body put in their place, who would really be effectual. It was no use going on with old machinery which had already proved practically useless. The House had had no information as to what the Government were going to do in that matter, except that some negotiations were going on between the Treasury and the Public Works Loan Commissioners which would lead to something—they were not told what. Legislation on that subject ought to be taken seriously in hand. The loans made by the Commissioners had been in nearly all cases to large harbours. That was a mistake. He was satisfied that for the purpose of saving life the great thing was to encourage the making and improvement of small harbours. The harbours of refuge were wanted not for ocean-going steamers, but for fishing boats. In some harbours where the draught of water had previously been sufficient it was now, owing to the increased size of the boats in use, too little. The result was that those harbours were practically useless, as the fishermen could not depend on being able to enter them in bad weather at all states of the tide. Inquiry would show that a great deal of the loss of life which took place round the coasts of Scotland was traceable to the absence of harbours suitable for fishing boats. He would like to hear that a Bill was in preparation which would facilitate Local Authorities in obtaining loans for the construction of small harbours. Without some such power, it was absolutely impossible to give the prosperity to the fishing industry which it ought to possess. He ventured to think that, in the opinion of that House, the Public Works Loan Commissioners had been proved to be a complete failure. ["No, no!"] Hon. Members might differ from him, but he ventured to think that that was the opinion of everybody capable of forming an opinion on the subject. They were not an efficient body for dealing with questions of this kind. They ought to be got rid of, and a body created which would perform their duties more thoroughly.

Mr. SCLATER-BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke) said, he did not think that hon. Members on that side of the House, or even right hon. Members on the Front Opposition Bench, would agree with the hon. Member, who had just sat down, in his estimate of the services of the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Those gentlemen devoted a large portion of their time to the Public Service without fee or reward, and he thought it rather hard that such strong remarks as those of the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down should be made about them. The Public Loan Commissioners stood between the House and the lavish issue of public money demanded by Members who pressed their claims in a manner inconvenient to the Government of the day. The Commissioners had saved the nation the expenditure of many millions of money. He agreed with the hon. Member in one thing—there was no reason why small harbours should not be as useful for harbours of refuge as large harbours; and if money could be advanced for small harbours he, for one, would be glad of it. But to say that money advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners for large harbours was money flung into the sea, was a statement which he thought would not receive the assent of the House of Commons. So far as he was aware of the views of the Commissioners, they would not consent to act as the mere agents of the machinery of Parliament, which left them no discretion. They believed they exercised real and important functions, both as regarded policy and the discretion and judgment they had to display upon the question as to whether or not the security for the loans which they made was sufficient. If their discretion was interfered with or taken away, he apprehended the Commissioners would resign their functions. He trusted Parliament would hesitate long before breaking down that barrier to the lavish expenditure of public money. It must be remembered that ratepayers, though a long-suffering class, had lately shown that they were not willing to add to their burdens. He would only add that he hoped that the House would hear from the Government what had been done to make matters work more smoothly between the Board of Trade and the Treasury, and that the result would be that advances would be made more speedily and satisfactorily.

Mr. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) said, he desired to draw the attention of the House to the claims of Sligo, a port on the West, which had an extensive coasting trade with Liverpool, Glasgow, and other places. Sligo was an inlet and outlet to a large number of towns of considerable importance. In consequence of a growing trade, the Sligo Harbour Commissioners applied to the Board of Works for a loan of £15,000 for the purpose of deepening the harbour, and dredging it, and making other necessary improvements. The Board of Trade declined to grant the loan, basing their refusal on the fact that the surplus from the harbour dues, after paying the expenses necessary, was not sufficient. But the reason that surplus was so small was because the two years preceding had been unprecedented in point of weather on the Western coasts. Storms had set in and destroyed several important works, and a large expenditure was needed for their repair. It was this expenditure which lessened the surplus, rather than any falling off of the harbour dues. In April, 1886, the Sligo Harbour Commissioners applied to the Treasury for permission for a deputation to wait upon them so that they might explain more fully the several bearings of the case, but as yet no reply had been sent to that request. He hoped the necessary facilities would be given to such deputation by the Secretary to the Treasury; and, if they were, he could promise that Gentleman that such facts would be laid before him as would enable him to recommend to the Loan Commissioners to grant the required loan.

Mr. ASHER (Elgin, &c.) said, a proper appreciation of this Motion could not be attained unless the clear distinction between the class of harbours dealt with by it and harbours of refuge was kept fully before the House. He understood that, prior to 1861, the policy was to support harbour accommodation by means of grants; but, as the result of discussions in this House, the policy was adopted of providing harbour accommodation by means of loans, and not by grants, and no large harbour had since been built at the public expense except where convict labour had been employed. The harbour at Peterhead was one of that class, and was referable to a principle totally different from that which regulated the harbours pointed at in this Motion. He did not concur with what his hon. Friend the Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Anderson) said with regard to the Public Works Loan Commissioners. This Motion was not at all intended to cast any blame upon them, and he believed it was generally conceded that they had performed their difficult duty with great judgment and discretion—guarding the interests of the public in the matter of loans. But what was pointed at in the Motion was, that there was at present imposed upon them a duty which they were not qualified to discharge—that of deciding on the policy of those works, while there was at present existing a Government Department in the Board of Trade much better qualified for the discharge of that duty. In that he (Mr. Asher) concurred. There were some general considerations with regard to the Motion which, it seemed to him, went to show that something was required to be done. Since 1861 the policy had been to provide fishing and commercial harbours by means of loans. He entirely approved of that policy. It seemed to him to bring into joint operation local enterprise and energy with the credit of the State, so that harbours could be provided with no loss to the public, and with the greatest advantage to the localities. But the broad features of the case were these. In 1861 the Legislature contemplated that, under the system then inaugurated, a sum of £360,000 might reasonably be expected to be required annually for such loans. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), that a fixed sum was not a good arrangement, and that there ought to be elasticity, so that a proper application need not be refused in any one year, because it happened that the sum fixed for the year had been expended before the application came in. But the thing to observe was that the full sum of £360,000 had never been reached in any one year, and that, although in one year it did come up to £260,000, it had been gradually dwindling year by year, until the amount given as loans for harbours was, during the last year, £40,000 or £50,000. That would be intelligible if the necessity had diminished; but everyone who knew anything of the subject was aware that along the coasts of Scotland there existed the greatest possible demand for harbour accommodation; so that they had to consider that, while the necessity for increased expenditure was annually growing, the amount of the loans was diminishing. There must be something radically wrong in a system which produced those results. In his opinion, it was attributable to the monopoly possessed by the Public Works Loan Commissioners of the policy of deciding upon the advisability of the loan and the sufficiency of the security; and, while it was quite proper that, on this latter point, the decision should rest with them, yet, in deciding on the former, they were apt to look at it too exclusively from the point of view of the Board that had to see to its securities. If the loan went up to the Public Works Loan Commissioners with the support of a recommendation from the Board of Trade, after full inquiry in favour of the policy of the loan, he could scarcely doubt that the result would be that the improvement of harbours by means of loans would be much more largely productive of good in the future than it had been in the past. Allusion had been made to the question of interest, and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury indicated no intention of reduction. Now, it appeared to him that the matter of interest was one of the most essential features of the case. He was not in favour of the loans being granted at so low a rate as to entail loss to the public; but, on the other hand, he objected to a rate which was to some extent prohibitive, and which was in excess of what was necessary for the safety of the public. He would put aside the rate for the short period of 15 years for loans, because it was beyond the resources of the places at which harbour accommodation was most needed, and loans most required, to repay the loans in a period short of 50 years. The sliding scale, beginning with a low rate of interest for 20 years, seemed plausible; but as they had no hope of repaying within 50 years, the higher rate was practically that they had to pay. But with collateral security, why should so high a rate of interest as 3¾ per cent be charged? He failed to see how the security was impaired, or the chance of repayment much impaired, by the extension of the time during which the money had to be paid. The theory of the sliding scale was, that the money was loaned by the State to be repaid in 30 years at 3½ per cent; and he failed to see why the addition of 20 years for repayment, by means of a sinking fund, should so depreciate the security as to warrant the increase of a half per cent. Looking at the great importance of providing harbour accommodation, to the immense impetus it would give to an industry in which a large portion of the population were engaged, and to the importance of the supply of an article of food, the proper policy would be to cut down the rate of interest to the lowest possible point which could be regarded as keeping the Exchequer reasonably safe. What had happened in the past seemed to him to justify a reduction, because the evidence taken by the Royal Commission showed that, so far from there having been any loss on interest, the interest actually between 1861 and 1883 amounted to £75,000, more than 3 per cent on the whole sum expended.

Mr. JACKSON: But the Government could not borrow at 3 per cent; that was why it was larger.

Mr. ASHER said, he had always understood that the credit of this country was such as to enable them to get money at a rate not higher than 3 per cent. Now, that was £75,000 which should not have been charged upon the harbours, and should have been saved to the several localities. Then, with regard the capital, the Report of the Commission showed that there was fair and reasonable security for these loans; because, out of a total sum lent from 1861 to 1883 of £2,500,000, there had already been repaid £694,000, while £1,700,000 was not due at the date of the Report; and there was only £62,000 in arrear. So that the experience of the past showed that these harbours were a subject upon which loans might be given with reasonable security; and the interest account showed that the interest might be reduced with safety to the Exchequer. In these circumstances, he hoped the Government would do something in the direction of enabling loans to be more largely taken advantage of than hitherto. There was no class of the community more desirous of meeting honourably all the obligations they might undertake than the fishing population, and he felt sure it would be doing good service, not only to them but to the State, if the Government would meet them at least half-way in the effort to facilitate the carrying out of improvements on their harbours.

Colonel HILL (Bristol, S.) said, he wished to urge upon the Government the importance of providing harbours of refuge on a systematic principle all round the coast, and more particularly at Lundy Island. The importance of these harbours to a great mercantile country like this could not be exaggerated. He was fully persuaded that expenditure of that kind would receive the almost unanimous approbation of the nation, and enable us to maintain our military and commercial supremacy. He would suggest that a certain sum should be devoted annually to the purpose, so that the work might go on continually.

Mr. MUNRO-FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) said, this question was one of particular interest to Scottish Representatives, not only because of the importance of the fishing industry in Scotland, but also on account of the more than usually intricate circumstances with which they had to deal. The hon. and learned Member for the Elgin Burghs had not in the least overstated the case when he spoke of the enormous development that might be effected in the harbour accommodation on the coasts of Scotland, and the importance which would be given to it by lowering the rate of interest. He could speak only with regard to fishing harbours, but as the Representative of a burgh with a great commercial harbour, he could vouch for the advantage which that burgh received from getting their money at 3¼ per cent for the construction of their harbour. In Scotland they found great difficulty in knowing where they were. It was very difficult to get clear and sufficient information upon which they could set to work. They had to deal not only with the Public Works Loan Commissioners, but also with the Board of Trade and the Scottish Fishery Board, and in the Highlands there were also questions connected with the Crofters Commission. They had no Local Authority through which the fishermen could make their wants sufficiently known locally, and there was the difficulty of finding subjects on which loans could be raised. The system of tenure in the North-East of Scotland was of a faulty nature. The system of feus had not been introduced there, and the fishermen could not raise loans on their properties. If these difficulties were removed, and clearer information were circulated, they should have less nonsense talked about impossible fishery harbours, and more practical work would be done. Members for fishing constituencies often had to deal with very troublesome matters connected with these fishery harbours, and sometimes gave very awkward pledges concerning them. A great deal had been said about the risk involved in the spending of money on fishery harbours. It was on account of that risk—on account of the difficulty that fishermen, who were generally men without capital, had in raising the necessary funds, and of the enormous increase which in some districts might be achieved by developing harbour accommodation in aiding the food supply of the country—it was on these grounds that they trusted Her Majesty's Government would give a favourable consideration to the case placed before them. Our fishermen had to contend with fishermen in foreign countries, who received large bounties; and the least we could do here was to secure that as far as possible they should have safety to their lives and property, and that the resources of the seas surrounding our shores should be developed to the very highest possible degree.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said, he had been asked to state whether any agreement had been entered into between the Board of Trade and the Public Works Loan Commissioners. He thought he should be able to answer the question in a manner satisfactory to both sides of the House. The hon. and learned Member for the Elgin Burghs (Mr. Asher) stated correctly that the Motion before the House was not in the slightest degree intended to cast any censure upon the Public Works Loan Commissioners, but it was intended to indicate that in the opinion of the House the Harbour Department of the Board of Trade was better qualified to give a technical opinion of the requirements of certain localities for harbours than the Commissioners could possibly be; and, further, that the powers of the Public Works Loan Commissioners should mainly be restricted to ascertaining whether the security offered was adequate and proper security—a question as to which the Board of Trade could not give a competent opinion. The view of the Board of Trade was perfectly in accord with that, and almost immediately after the Report of the Commission presided over by the right hon. Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks), the Board placed themselves in communication with the Treasury with the view, if possible, of arriving at some arrangement in the direction he had indicated. The recommendation of that Committee was that to the Harbour Department of the Board of Trade should be confined the duty of deciding and reporting as to the policy and expediency of any particular work in the United Kingdom; while the question of the value of the security which was offered by the Harbour Authority should alone be dealt with by the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Since that time—quite recently—the Board of Trade had been in communication with the Treasury, and he was now authorized to say that an agreement had been entered into between the two Departments, the conditions of which he would give to the House—

"It is agreed between the Board of Trade and the Loan Commissioners that greater latitude is to be given to the class of harbour works which are to be assisted by loans under the Harbour and Passing Tolls Act of 1861. The Board of Trade consent to exclude from the definition of works to be so assisted—(1) open piers, such as Brighton and Ramsey; (2) wharfs and warehouses, and other mere facilities for trade; (3) docks where dues are levied; (4) river improvements which are independent of refuge and shelter at the river mouth. The

Board of Trade will recommend harbour works for loans subject to these limitations, and the Public Works Loan Commissioners will accept the recommendation so far as policy is concerned. The Public Works Loan Commissioners remain sole judges of the security offered and it is understood that the agreement implies no relaxation on their part of the principle that they will grant no loan unless fully satisfied that the security offered is ample. If in any case the Public Works Loan Commissioners should consider that recommendations fall outside the agreed limitations, or if new questions as to the nature of works to be assisted should arise, a conference will be held between the Board of Trade and the Loan Commissioners. If the two parties should not be able to agree, the points at issue will be referred to the First Lord of the Treasury as arbitrator. Loans will not be recommended by the Board of Trade to encourage mere local rivalry."

Further than that—

"Reports of the Board of Trade are to be made upon the various applications for harbour loans, stating fully the grounds of the Board's recommendations. These Reports are to be laid before Parliament. The Board of Trade, in making their recommendations, propose, subject to the limitations described before, to be guided by the following considerations:—(1) That refuge and shelter should be considered more important than mere facilities to trade; (2) that fishery harbours should be very favourably considered; (3) that public trusts should be more favourably considered than mere profit-making companies; (4) that market rates should be charged to wealthy bodies obtaining Government loans, unless in respect of works which it may not be the interest of the ratepayers to make."

These suggestions, he thought, were very fair, and would, he hoped, meet the views of hon. Members who considered that loans should be made in aid of fishing harbours rather than for the purpose of promoting commercial undertakings. As a matter of fact, private enterprise did not require State aid in this respect, because in 20 years no less than £23,000,000 had been expended by private enterprise on 17 commercial harbours. He did not think the House would consider it was in any way the duty of the Public Works Loan Commissioners to grant loans solely for the purpose of promoting the rivalry in the trade of one harbour against another. That was not the object the Commissioners had ever had in view, or ought to have in view; but they ought to encourage—and by this scheme they would encourage—the fishing industry. They would, in the case of dangerous harbours, render them if possible more safe. As regarded the rate of interest, that was a question solely for the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and one in which the Board of Trade would in no way interfere. He would point out that the agreement made between the Board of Trade and the Public Works Loan Commissioners carried out to the full the suggestions made by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. R. W. Duff) who had brought the Motion before the notice of the House, inasmuch as it gave an initiative to the Board of Trade, and because the Public Works Loan Commissioners would have the benefit of the technical experience of the Harbour Department of the Board of Trade with regard to the harbours to be assisted. The only question that the Public Works Loan Commissioners would have to consider would in future be whether the security was adequate for the loan required. Under these circumstances, he hoped the hon. Gentleman would not think it necessary to press the Motion, but would withdraw it; and, if so, he believed he would find that the arrangement between the two Departments would be much more satisfactorily and expeditiously carried out than under Parliamentary interference.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): As Chairman of the Select Committee which sat upon the subject of harbour accommodation, I should like to say a few words before the debate closes. The statement made by the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) is what we desired, and we shall be glad to accept it as far as it goes, as it practically covers the point raised by the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Banffshire (Mr. R. W. Duff). It has never been suggested that such things as promenade piers should be brought under the Board of Trade, and, in my opinion, should not be helped by public loans at all. I should have wished that the Board of Trade had gone a step or two further, and had taken upon itself the duty of discriminating somewhat more clearly what harbours should receive public assistance at all; because the principle which has been acted upon by the Commissioners up to the present is this—that whatever harbour chooses to ask for aid, provided it can give the necessary security, is entitled to obtain a loan, irrespective of how far the work is necessary or likely to be of advantage to the public at large. Now, I say that, when we are lending public money for the purpose of providing refuge and shelter ports, we should take care that they are provided in the particular locality where they would be of the greatest possible use. That is particularly the case in regard to fishing harbours, which are to a peculiar degree proper subjects for loans of this kind. It is quite extraordinary how many of them there are, especially on the North-East coast. As a matter of fact we have a series of small fishing harbours, which on the average comprise one for every eight miles of coast. Each of these harbours has its own colony of boats, but in a storm the harbours are quite useless, and in any stress of weather it is difficult to enter them, even at those states of the tide when there is a sufficient depth of water. Now, I maintain that the proper policy for the Government to pursue, is to supplement these fishing harbours by somewhat larger harbours, capable of admitting boats at all states of the tide, at intervals all round the coast. If such a policy is adopted, the greatest care will have to be taken in selecting the places where new and important harbours could be most properly placed. For this reason, I think that considerable discrimination should be used in consenting to loans for harbours, altogether irrespective of the fact whether the security offered is sufficient or not, or whether an available harbour can be made for the money. With regard to what the Secretary of the Board of Trade has said as to the rate of interest, I quite agree with my hon. Friend the late Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher) said. It is quite useless to grant loans for any less period than 50 years. I think that term is short enough, because the works, of course, take some time to execute, and a still further time for increased revenue to accrue. With regard to the question of the decrease in the number of loans applied for, I can honestly say that the decrease is, in a great degree, due to the difficulties put in the way of obtaining them. The House has been told that in this matter a step forward has been made, and I am quite ready to admit it. There is another question touching the same point which I should like to notice, and that is that many of these small places have existing debts already — debts due to banks, and so forth, at a comparatively heavy rate of interest. One of the recommendations which the Select Committee thought was well worthy of consideration by the Government was, whether it would not be advisable, from the case which had been made out, to enable the Public Works Loan Commissioners to advance money for the consolidation of such existing debts. I am speaking of small places, and not harbours whose debts are to be counted by thousands of pounds—but still, harbours where improvements are necessary and needed. That is a point, the necessity of which, I think, presses upon the hon. Gentlemen opposite for consideration. With regard to the action of the Public Works Loan Commissioners generally, I have no desire to depreciate the high importance and usefulness of their work, but I think they are a far more competent and useful body in reference to their ordinary work than they are in regard to harbour loans. You have got 16 gentlemen of the highest integrity, for the most part resident in the City. I quite admit that they are well enough able to judge of the value of the security offered for the construction of water works, or carrying out drainage works, or building schools; but I maintain that they do not possess the technical knowledge necessary to enable them to judge properly with regard to harbours, and I think that one of the great mischiefs in regard to harbour loans is, that they are treated on the same footing as other loans. Now, I contend that this is entirely wrong, and I will give the House my reasons why I think it is wrong. In the first place, it is a distinct breach of the pledge given by Parliament to the country. In the early part of this century any assistance to harbour construction was given by way of grant. Between the years 1800 and 1860 £10,000,000 was given in that way, of which only some £400,000 went to the smaller harbours. In 1857 a Committee of the House, followed by a Royal Commission in 1859, made some recommendations on the subject. Those recommendations were so large that they entirely staggered right hon. Gentlemen then at the Treasury and the Board of Trade. I do not wonder at it. The policy of dealing with this subject by grants was then done away with, and in lieu of it the policy was adopted of loans at a low rate of interest, the payment being spread over a long period of years. It was distinctly laid down that the rate of interest was to be 3¼ per cent, and the term 50 years. By treating a harbour loan as any other loan a distinct breach was committed of the pledge given by an Act of Parliament. The next step was in 1879, when the rate was raised practically 1 per cent. That arrangement again was modified in 1882, by allowing collateral security to be given, and in 1885 the rate of interest was lowered ½ per cent in such cases where collateral security is forthcoming. My next point is, that these loans have not been treated in the same way as other matters which came before the Public Works Loan Commissioners. The ordinary subjects that come before the Loan Commissioners are matters in regard to which Parliament has stepped in and declared that it is necessary that certain things should be done—such as schools, water works, drainage, and other objects. In all those cases you can tell what is going to happen—Parliament has compelled certain works to be done for the benefit of the people. You, therefore, know that you will have to expend a certain sum of money, perhaps, in building schools which will accommodate a certain number of children. Parliament has said that schools must be built, and we have got the unexceptionable security of the rates of the country. But in the case of harbours Parliament does not say that certain things shall be done; but if a locality comes forward and says—"We are willing to put our hands into our pockets for the purpose of making a harbour; will you lend us the money to do it?" That I maintain is a very different thing from the case where Parliament says that a certain thing must be done. There is, however, another point and that is the element of uncertainty in connection with all harbours which is inherent in the nature of the case. You never can be sure, even with the advice of the best engineers, whether when the work is completed it will not cost a good deal more than was originally contemplated, and whether it will effect the object for which it was intended. There are the inevitable risks during the construction of the works of the inroads of the sea, and there is great risk even after their completion of injury from the same cause. When the country lends money for harbour construction I think it ought to be prepared to accept that risk, and, provided the security is good enough, to bear a certain amount of the risk, in order to say that the public work for which it lends the money should fulfil the work for which it is lent. I can give an illustration of the way in which these works have been dealt with in the case of my own constituency. I refer to the harbour of Eyemouth, with which I am well acquainted. That harbour is admittedly the most suitable place for a harbour upon that coast. Expert after expert has so reported. It enjoys an admirable position for a harbour of refuge, seeing that it is in immediate contiguity with one of the most productive fishing grounds on the whole of the North-East coast. They prepared a big scheme for the construction of harbour works which was to cost £80,000, but the necessary funds were not forthcoming. In 1880 they made an application for assistance to the Scotch Fishery Board. In 1881 there was a terrible gale, and one-half of the male fishing population of Eyemouth were drowned. That occurrence naturally stirred up the people of the locality, and they were determined to do something or other to remedy the existing state of things. A smaller scheme was devised—a scheme which was to cost £40,000; but even that was considered too big, and it was not until 1885 that the locality was able to negotiate a loan of £25,000 upon the collateral security of the rates. These unfortunate people managed to negotiate their loan just two months before the reduction of the rate of interest, and the consequence is that they are still burdened with a loan of £25,000 under the old rate of interest enforced under the Treasury Minute of 1879. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) was very much impressed with that case, and was inclined to give way. The people of Eyemouth were obliged in the first instance to increase the accommodation of the inner basin of the harbour, so that the harbour itself would be able to provide for more boats, that from the increased revenue they might be able to meet the liabilities of their loan. To increase the depth of water at the entrance, it was necessary to dredge the harbour, and when the dredging was commenced it was found that the North-West pier, which it was always intended to retain as it was had been built upon the mud, and not taken down to the rock. The consequence was that had the dredging operations been proceeded with the scour of the sea would have washed away the foundation of this pier and it would have fallen in. It became necessary to rebuild this pier before the entrance could be improved; for this there is no funds; and so the place now has a good inner basin, but no improved entrance. That is the present position of Eyemouth. The people there are fixed with a debt of £25,000. Their revenue is not likely to increase, because they are unable to afford a sufficiently good entrance to the harbour. In such a case, I maintain that it is very bad policy for the Government not to come to the rescue, and advance another £5,000 or £6,000 to complete the works. Surely if the security of the town was sufficient for £25,000, it was good enough for a further sum of £5,000 or £6,000. Because that sum has not been advanced, I am afraid that both capital and interest will be lost altogether. I think the Government should be chary in advancing any money at all without ascertaining to a certainty, in the first instance, that the particular sum asked for will accomplish the object for which it is required. Yet this is what has happened in the case of Eyemouth. The Loan Commissioners refuse to advance the extra £5,000 or £6,000. I am afraid they will find themselves losers in the end, and in the meantime both the fishermen and the ratepayers are in a very bad way. I do not think I ought to trouble the House at any greater length on this subject; but I insist on the necessity and the desirability of doing all the Government can to assist the small fishing harbours. The fisheries of this country are of enormous value and importance. It will be found from the Returns of the Board of Trade that the value of fish caught last year amounted to no less than £6,400,000. The fishermen who live in these small colonies are not in a position to spend large sums of money. So far as experience goes, what has occurred in the case of the counties of Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, the construction of good harbours, has been accompanied with their bringing in good revenues. I believe that if additional harbours are provided, the result will be the same if the positions are carefully selected. The question is not only one of saving many lives, but of enabling a large number of people to live; I do appeal most earnestly to the Treasury and to the Board of Trade to do all in their power to assist this most important work.

Mr. J. C. STEVENSON (South Shields) said, that having been interested in this question for more than 30 years as a Member of the Tyne Improvement Commission, and ever since he had been a Member of the House, he desired to add a few words before the discussion closed. He congratulated his hon. Friend who brought on the question on his good fortune at having obtained a calm interval in the present political strife for this discussion, and on the amount of concession which he had obtained from the Government. While the sympathies of the House were naturally with the smaller fishery harbours, he claimed for the large trading harbours, such as the Tyne, the credit of having saved the Treasury enormous sums of money by the protection which the deepening of these harbours had afforded to shipping colliers in the North Sea, which the country would have compelled Parliament to grant for purely refuge harbours. Parliament adopted instead the cheaper and better policy of improving the harbours of destination, by means of loans at an exceptionally low rate of interest, and they wanted now to go back to the original policy of the Act of 1861. That Act, as first administered, made the Board of Trade the recommending authority, leaving the Loan Commission to decide only on the security. He was glad that it was now proposed to restore the position of the Board of Trade in respect of policy. The Act of 1861 was based on the principle of exceptionally low rates of interest for harbours, and was so administered at first; and there was no reason to increase the rate as the State could borrow money at a lower rate now than at that time. Too severe a view had been taken of the very small so-called losses to the Treasury by these loans. Sea-works were in their nature experimental, and even the failures in one place were most valuable experiences for the designs of subsequent erections. He had to complain that in the Tyne

Acts, and in those of other harbours, the Treasury had inserted clauses prohibiting the borrowing of money from the Loan Commissioners, or at any rate imposing conditions of priority of security in favour of the Loan Board over other creditors. He also complained that, under the Income Tax Acts, harbour trusts were charged income tax on their surplus revenue. This surplus was necessary to satisfy the Loan Commissioners and other lenders, of the soundness of the finances of the trust, and being spent in lieu of capital was in no sense profit, and therefore ought not to be taxed.

Mr. R. W. DUFF said, that after the appeal that had been made to him by the Secretary to the Board of Trade he would not press the Motion to a Division. The hon. Gentleman opposite had practically conceded nearly all he had asked. He should like to know, however, whether the agreement to which the hon. Gentleman referred would be laid on the Table of the House, and on what terms the Government proposed to grant loans to individuals and Joint Stock Companies? He hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would reconsider the matter, and see if he could not give them money at 3¼ per cent. The matter was of some interest; but he was satisfied with what had been said by the Secretary to the Board of Trade, and he asked leave to withdraw his Motion.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, that hon. Members should take care to see that this matter was considered not solely with regard to the peculiarities of the East Coast. This line of coast had many peculiarities, and was in many respects different from the West Coast. A large trade passed along it, and a large number of wrecks resulted during the course of the year. The fishing trade on the East Coast was quite different from that on the West, which, in the case of Ireland, was largely undeveloped. He hoped that the limitation of not advancing money to Trade Companies for the purpose of developing trade would not be adhered to, because it would act in a most injurious manner in the case of Ireland. It seemed to him that the Secretary to the Treasury did not go so far in the matter of interest as the Act of 1861. He thought that the interest allowed under that Act was 3¼ per cent; but in 1879 it had grown from 3½ to 4½ per cent, which was an enormous increase. With reference to the case of Galway Harbour, he might mention the fact that every naval officer and other official who went before the Committee on Harbours of Refuge, spoke in the strongest terms of the necessity of doing something for Galway. Conservative Governments had said that they were going to establish a convict prison at Galway in order to complete the works there, and they had been continually dangling before the inhabitants the prospect of a large scheme being carried out there. If the Government meant to manage that port they ought really to do so, and not to delude the people of Galway with the expectation that they were going to make a magnificent harbour there, although they did nothing to execute it. He wished, also, to ask the Secretary to the Treasury how that Act was to be worked in Ireland, and whether that country would obtain all the advantages which were to be enjoyed by Great Britain? The right hon. Member for Berwickshire wanted what he called small fishery harbours in England into which vessels could run at low spring tides. Such harbours in Ireland, where they had not so much money, would be called very good harbours, and they would be most useful on the West Coast, where four or five of them were much needed. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer had held out to them, as one of the great advantages which they would gain from the Government, not that they would get Home Rule, but that the advisability of establishing some deep-sea harbours on the West Coast of Ireland would be taken into favourable consideration by the Ministry. He hoped that the Government would redeem what might almost be regarded as their pledges, and construct deep-sea harbours, drawing nine or ten feet at spring tides, on the West Coast of Ireland.

Mr. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) said, the £20,000 for the construction of Arklow Harbour had been guaranteed by the neighbouring baronies, and he wished to call the attention of the House to the mode in which the money was expended.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, the case of Arklow Harbour did not come under the terms of the Motion before the House, and could not in Order be brought forward at that time.

Mr. W. J. CORBET said, he wished merely to state that the £20,000 was ample for the purpose of constructing a harbour at Arklow, were it not for the fact that the Board of Works proceeded on defective plans; and he, therefore, appealed to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson)—whose courtesy during the long and protracted correspondence on the subject he was bound to acknowledge—that the poor fishermen of Arklow should not be saddled with the cost of the additional works rendered necessary owing to the bungling of the Board of Works. He trusted the Government would take this matter into consideration, and come to the conclusion that the poor fishermen and inhabitants of the town should not be called upon to make good the default of the Board of Works.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) said, he thought it was a waste of public money to appoint Committee after Committee on this or any other subject, and then when they received the Reports of these Committees and Commissions to allow their recommendations to lie idly by. This applied in a particular degree to the question under discussion. They had already had Commissions on the subject, and hitherto, so far as they knew, no good had come to the county from these Commissions. They had cost considerable sums of money, but nothing had been done to carry out the recommendation of the Commissioners. He would admit that the answer which the Government had given to the Motion at present under consideration went, to some extent, to meet the point raised, but not in a full or satisfactory manner. Hitherto it appeared that the Board of Trade and Loan Commissioners had not had their duties properly defined, and the way in which they had conducted their business had led to a considerable amount of confusion, expense, and delay. The Loan Commissioners were no judges as to where a harbour of refuge might be usefully constructed. They were gentlemen who, as a rule, were not qualified to give an opinion on this matter. The Board of Trade were, in their turn, not the proper authorities to advise as to the solvency of the securities offered for the repayment of loans given by that measure for carrying out these works. He had gathered, however, from the reply which had been given to this Motion by the Government, that the duties of those two Bodies would in future be properly defined—that the duty of the Loan Commissioners would be confined to looking into the nature of the security offered for the loan requested, and that of the Board of Trade would be limited to considering the suitability of the sites recommended for harbours of refuge. If this was done, and the two Boards were induced to work harmoniously together, great advantage would thereby accrue to the public. It was impossible to lay too much stress on this subject, bearing in mind the great loss of life and property that might be prevented by the construction of harbours of refuge; and he urged the Government to offer Local Authorities such terms in lowness of interest and extent of years for repayment as would almost compel them to construct harbours where they were needed. It must be acknowledged, he thought, that local enterprise had hitherto done its part in the matter; but that the State had failed to do its fair share, seeing that the work was, to a large extent, of a national character. Still, he was satisfied that, if sufficiently favourable terms were offered to Local Authorities, harbours of refuge would be constructed on many parts of our coasts. Taking Waterford, in which he was particularly interested, as a case in point, he believed that if the Government offered the Local Authorities a loan for 50 years at a low rate of interest, they would remove the bar and make the harbour one of the finest and most useful in the United Kingdom, and thus prevent serious loss of life and property on the coast. In one year 36 vessels in distress came off this harbour, and he regretted to say a number of these became total wrecks. By a judicious expenditure of a little money this harbour could be rendered a place of the greatest safety.

Mr. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.) said, that the Board of Trade was composed of gentlemen who were by no means capable of deciding questions as to the construction of harbours. He felt bound to complain of the manner in which the Board of Works in Ireland performed its duties in connection with the construction of harbours. It was the slowest Board in all Ireland, and was largely composed of worn-out public servants. He held that the responsibility of determining when and where harbours should be built ought not to be divided. One Board ought to be constituted having supreme control. The loans granted under the present system were often too small, and the result was that many harbours lacked stability and were not large enough. The time for the repayment of the loans should be extended from 60 to 63 years, and the interest should be lowered to such a rate that Local Bodies should take advantage of them. With regard to the Arklow Harbour, it was a glaring example how the work was done by the engineers of the Board of Works. The engineers of the Board knew nothing about the local tides. They drew plans which were not practicable, the result being that the works were unstable and inefficient. Instead of adopting their present cheese-paring policy, the Government should grant such an amount as would enable the works to be carried out in an efficient manner. He urged the importance of providing piers and harbours for fishermen on favourable terms, being convinced that whatever money was granted in this direction by the Government they would get ample value for it. The loans made to Harbour Boards ought not to be repayable within less than 50 years, and the cost of harbours of refuge, like that at Arklow, should be defrayed partly out of Imperial funds, the interests which they served being by no means exclusively local.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said, he desired to point out that the Harbour Commissioners of Waterford had already incurred an expenditure of £2,000 in obtaining a Provisional Order, in order to obtain the benefit of a loan; but the rate demanded was too high to enable them to take advantage of the loan. It was a matter of importance that something should be done to improve the harbour. A great number of shipwrecks had occurred there in recent years. On one occasion a large barque which was unable to cross the bar went down with all hands. The case of Arklow Harbour was an instance of gross incompetency and lamentable waste of public money. He thought that in the fugitive moments which the Government had to spare from pursuits more congenial to them, they might give some attention to the development of those resources in Ireland which, if she had the power of managing her own affairs, Ireland would soon turn to the best account.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) said, that, in supporting the Motion, he would recommend that the interest on the loans should be materially lessened, so as to induce the Local Authorities to borrow and construct harbours, and develop the resources of the country. It was a matter of Imperial necessity that harbours should be constructed round their coasts, and it would tend to the safety of their commerce, and greatly minimize the loss of life which occurred year after year.

Mr. O'HEA (Donegal, W.) said, that he had called the attention of the late Government to the case of two harbours in the constituency of West Donegal—Portnoo and Bunbeg—on which large amounts had been expended by the Board of Trade; but the work had been carried out in such an unskilful manner as to make both harbours a nuisance instead of a boon. He believed that two Government engineers had gone to visit that place, but he had never heard that they had done anything more. The foundations of a new pier were laid there some time ago; but that pier was now a mass of *débris*, and instead of a shelter it was a danger to vessels entering the harbour. At another harbour in West Donegal, a steamer which came within about a mile of the coast was unable to call in bad weather for want of a suitable pier. If something practical were to be done the people would not grudge the money.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) said, that a similar Motion had been brought before the House last Session, but no practical result had followed. In his opinion, unless the works which were begun were carried to completion, the money might as well be thrown into the sea. From Waterford to Bantry Bay, practically speaking, although there was an immense amount of fishing on that part of the coast, there had been no money spent by the Government. He thought also that something might be done in the way of blowing up the rock which barred the harbour of Cork, if money were advanced to the Cork Harbour Commissioners for that purpose.

Mr. BARRY (Wexford, S.): I do not think that anything could have been more clear than the speech of the hon. Member for Banffshire (Mr. Duff) in introducing this subject to the House. I maintain that the present state of the machinery for dealing with this important question of harbours is altogether inadequate. In the course of this debate we have heard some very hard questions about the Public Works Loan Commissioners. The right hon. Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) went so far as to say that the Commissioners have altogether neglected their duty, and have studied different interests from those of the great question with which they have been called upon to deal. Now, I do not altogether agree in that opinion. I think that under the circumstances in which the Public Works Loan Commissioners are placed, all things considered, they have discharged their duty in a very satisfactory manner. But it appears to me that they have laid too much stress upon the purely commercial aspect of the question, and have excluded altogether from their consideration matters of public policy. If the Resolution of the hon. Member for Banffshire is agreed to, the effect would be to divide the consideration of the subject into two parts—one being its commercial aspect, and the other the consideration of the question of public policy. We have also heard during the debate a defence of the Public Works Loan Commissioners by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Hants (Mr. Sclater-Booth). The right hon. Gentleman said the Commissioners are a body of highly honourable gentlemen; that they are unpaid; and that they have discharged their duties in a manner which has been altogether satisfactory. Now, it appears to me a very poor argument to say that because gentlemen are unpaid, and are filling a purely honorary office, therefore they must be trusted with the decision of very large and important issues. My opinion is that a question of this great magnitude, affecting an important mercantile country like this—namely, the question of providing harbours of refuge—would be in much fitter hands if left to the disposal of the Board of Trade. There is a strong opinion among those who are interested in the matter that it is not only an important, but a most urgent question. A considerable amount of evidence was submitted to the Harbour Committee, which was so ably presided over by the right hon. Member for Berwickshire. That Committee took the evidence of experts—men who thoroughly understood the condition of the coast and harbour accommodation—and any hon. Member who will take the trouble to read through the evidence submitted to that Select Committee will find that the harbour accommodation, particularly in reference to harbours of refuge, is altogether inadequate around our coast. Although now two years have elapsed since the Select Committee sent in their Report, as far as I know not a single step has been taken to carry out any of the important recommendations made by the Committee, and the whole matter of securing loans or making harbours of refuge still remains with the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and nothing is likely to be done until some step is taken in the direction of the Motion of the hon. Member for Banffshire to remedy the evils which are complained of. I have no desire to detain the House by entering into any details upon the question; I certainly have in my possession a great deal of detailed information showing where the Public Works Loan Commissioners have already failed to discharge in a satisfactory manner their public functions in reference to harbours of refuge; but I do not propose to trouble the House with them. I will, however, with the permission of the House, submit a single case which happens to concern my own constituency, and which shows to what a lamentable extent the Public Works Loan Commissioners have acted in dealing with this important question. As far back as 1864 an Act of Parliament was obtained for the construction of a harbour at Ross-slade, in the County of Wexford, and although repeated applications were made to the Public Works Loan Commissioners to further that object, nothing was done. Four years afterwards, on the recommendation of Captain Field, of Her Majesty's ship *Helicon*, the Admiral ordered a survey. That survey took place, and a Report was sent in recommending the construction of a harbour at this particular point. Again, an interval of three years elapsed before the Public Works Loan Commissioners took any action in the matter. At the end of that time they ordered a special survey to be made by Mr. Rendel, the eminent civil engineer, and then, on his recommendation, the Public Works Loan Commissioners agreed to advance a sum of £75,000 to be secured on the harbour tolls alone; but at the same time they imposed as a condition that if they advanced that sum the promoters of the harbour should undertake to connect such harbour with the railway system of Ireland. That involved another considerable delay, which amounted to something like two years. At the end of that time a sufficient sum of money was raised locally to connect the proposed harbour with the general railway system of Ireland. A sum of from £75,000 to £78,000 was raised, and the railway was completed. The Public Works Loan Commissioners then advanced by three instalments a sum which amounted altogether to £45,000, although the original amount agreed upon was £75,000. When that £45,000 had been advanced they ordered a second investigation by Mr. Rendel, and then it was Mr. Rendel discovered what is often—indeed, I may say invariably—the case in large operations of this kind—namely, that the original estimate was not sufficient for the completion of the work. Anyone conversant with harbour works will know that it is a very rare exception for a harbour to be constructed within the original time, and certainly the Public Works Loan Commissioners, from their lengthened experience in such matters, must have known that it was a very unusual circumstance to complete the harbour for the sum of money originally demanded. Mr. Rendel sent in a further Report, stating what the amount of money was that would be necessary to complete the harbour. What happened then? The Public Works Loan Commissioners, ignoring altogether the question of public policy involved in the construction of this harbour, actually suspended their contribution towards the cost of the remaining works. The result was that, for two years and a-half, the works were allowed to stand idle and the machinery to rust. At the end of that time, acting under strong representations, they made a further advance of £15,000; but when that sum was expended, of course, the harbour still remained in a most unfinished state. Repeated applications were made to them to finish their part of the original bargain. They were given to understand how important it was, from a national point of view, to complete these works. But it was all in vain; the works were stopped, and for a period of two years were permitted to stand idle. The same amount of dislocation followed; the plant became, to a great extent, useless, and heavy loss followed to those who had entered into the construction of the railway, on the understanding that the Public Works Loan Commissioners would advance £75,000 for the construction of the harbour. The railway remained practically inoperative, and nothing was done even sufficient to recoup the promoters of the railway for interest upon the capital they had invested. This state of things prevailed down to 1881. In that year I had the honour of introducing a deputation to the late Mr. Forster, who was then Chief Secretary for Ireland. After hearing what the state of the case was, that right hon. Gentleman said that the only way to recover the large sums of money which had already been spent on the pier and harbour and on the railway was for the Government to sanction such loans as would enable the works to be completed. Backed up by that strong opinion from the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and by highly influential opinion in the county, a further application was made to the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and again the extreme urgency of the case was ignored, and nothing was done. The next step was to make an application for a grant under the Pier and Harbour Commission, which was then sitting under the Presidency of my hon. Friend the Member for Carlow (Mr. J. A. Blake). The inquiry of that Commission was held in January, 1884, and an important body of evidence was placed before the Commission. The Commissioners, while agreeing as to the necessity of establishing a harbour of refuge at this particular point, and as to the desirability of the Public Works Loan Commissioners making an advance to complete the harbour works, said that they were unable to make a grant from their own funds, because the matter did not come exactly within the scope of the inquiry which my hon. Friend the Member for Carlow was conducting. Another deputation, in consequence, waited upon the Treasury, and a further appeal was made, with the result that the balance of the loan originally agreed upon has been granted. I may point out that in the interval which elapsed, and taking the two periods during which the works were stopped, an enormous loss had accrued. I cannot at this moment give an accurate estimate as to the amount of the loss, but I know that it was very large indeed; and I maintain that it is a very great reflection upon the Public Works Loan Commissioners that they should have twice departed from their original bargain to advance the sum of £75,000. It is much to their discredit that they permitted a work of national importance to stand still for a period of five years, and that then, at the end of that time, acting under very strong representations and under great pressure, they made the advance that was necessary to cover the original amount promised. I submit that under the Motion of the hon. Member for Banffshire such a state of things would be met in future, because an important Department of the State, such as the Board of Trade, would take the question into consideration from a broader point of view than that which is taken by the Public Works Loan Commissioners. They would allow the question of safety and the desirability of having a harbour of refuge on different parts of the coast to have due weight with them. Broader questions of policy would influence the action of the Board of Trade, whereas such considerations are altogether excluded from the deliberations of a body like the Public Works Loan Commissioners, who take a hard-and-fast commercial view only. The particular case which I have cited stands in this position—that a sum of public money, amounting in the aggregate to £122,000, has been advanced, while private money to the extent of £76,000 has also been expended; so that something like £200,000 has been advanced to make this harbour of Rosslade. I may add that that is the only harbour of refuge between Dublin and Waterford. Under the present machinery provided by the State there is not the slightest chance of this harbour being finished. Some hon. Gentlemen may say—"Why does not the public spirit of the locality step in and stop the practice?" All I can reply to that argument is this—that the public in the neighbourhood, both landowners and land workers—landlords and tenants—have already advanced £76,000 for the construction of the railway, and they feel and believe that the Government, through the Public Works Loan Commissioners, are directly committed and pledged to finish this work. There is not the most remote possibility that another penny of private money will be subscribed for this purpose. The consequence of the present state of things is that something like £200,000, more than one-half of which consists of public money, has been absolutely thrown into the sea, and will be irretrievably lost, unless something farther is done by the Board of Trade, or some other Department of the State, to finish the works. Knowing, as I do, that instances of this kind could be multiplied to an unlimited extent in connection with the harbours around the coast, there can be no wonder that hon. Members sitting on these Benches should feel anxious that the Motion of the hon. Member for Banffshire should be pressed. I do not know whether the hon. Member intends to press the Motion to a Division; but, whether it is so not, I hope the Government will take the matter into their serious consideration, and will come to the conclusion, viewing the question from a common-sense point of view, that it is absurd, in a matter involving the lives of hundreds of people and thousands of pounds of property, that it should be at the disposal of a number of gentlemen merely filling an honorary position as Public Works Loan Commissioners. It is highly essential that the question should be dealt with by some great Department similar to the Board of Trade. Whether the hon. Member presses his Motion to a Division or not, I hope the Government will at once take the question into their serious consideration, and if they refuse to adopt the Resolution they will, at all events, at an early date, introduce a measure which will transfer the power of dealing with such important matters from the very unsatisfactory body now intrusted with the power to the Board of Trade or some other authority.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I cannot rise on this occasion without expressing my very great regret at the cause which has deprived us of the services of the right hon. Gentleman the Speaker this evening, and my hope and trust that we shall soon see the right hon. Gentleman back again. I have only a very few remarks to make upon the Motion now before the House. I think that the hon. Member for Banffshire (Mr. Duff) is entitled to the gratitude of the Irish Members, and of those of his own country, for having brought this matter forward. Having represented at one time a maritime constituency, I fully understand—I have always understood—that the Tory Party are in favour of material advances as opposed to what I may call theoretical considerations; and I would therefore venture to express a hope that, after the many deputations which have waited upon the Treasury, we shall not now appeal in vain to right hon. Gentlemen opposite, at the moment they are passing a Coercion Bill for Ireland, to supply some salve by giving a little material assistance. In regard to the Motion itself, I believe that if my fellow-countrymen, sitting on this side of the House, had had the drafting of it they could not have expressed it in a more admirable manner than has been done by the hon. Member for Banffshire. The hon. Gentleman has entirely met our views, because what we feel is this. We have an enormous Mercantile Marine plying, it may be, from Liverpool or Glasgow, and coming in various directions down the Channel, and when there is a west wind blowing from the English Coast there is a considerable amount of life and property endangered on our side of the Channel from the want of proper accommodation. I think it is most unfair that monetary considerations should be allowed to enter into the calculations of the Government in this matter of fixing harbours of refuge. I may say that I had some bitter experience of these disastrous gales only recently, when a vessel running from Liverpool to Wexford became a total wreck on the harbour bar at Wexford, and some goods in which I was interested, and which were not insured, were totally lost. The propriety of constructing a harbour of refuge upon the East Coast has been reported on over and over again by the Government authorities, and if the harbour had been constructed the constant losses which now occur would be prevented, and a considerable number of unfortunate sailors who have been drowned would still be in active service. I know that it is somewhat unusual to raise questions of this sort on such an occasion as this. However, I see present the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston), for whom I have a great respect, although, unfortunately, I am bitterly opposed to him in politics. The hon. Member was for some years a Fishery Commissioner in Ireland, and the only political action in my life which I regret having taken was when I asked that he should be dismissed from that position. The hon. Member is well acquainted with the harbours in Ireland, and he knows that the considerations which have been put forward by my hon. Friends are quite correct. I challenge the Government to say that, from the Harbour of Dublin down to Waterford, which can hardly be called a harbour at all, there is a suitable harbour for vessels to run for in bad weather. Thirty or 40 years ago Reports were presented to the Government in favour of making this harbour of refuge; but Her Majesty's Ministers did nothing to carry out the recommendations made to them, and when we go to the Treasury, as to my sorrow I have done on three or four occasions—although I intend to go no more, unless I really have some hope—the local people who have waited upon the Government have found their wishes entirely unattended to. In this very case the people of Wexford have been befooled into constructing a railway to the village of Ross-slade, which has cost them £75,000, and the Government, after promising them material assistance, have left them in the lurch ever since. We have had some experience of the hon. Gentleman who is the present Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson); we have found him most conciliatory, and anxious to meet the desires of hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House, and to treat them as human beings. In this case I would make an appeal to him. We have here the whole coast embracing one-half of the East side of Ireland, which is a most dangerous coast to navigate, and it is proposed to complete a harbour into which your own vessels will run if they ever get the chance. Hitherto, unhappily, they have not got a chance, and many of them have been wrecked in consequence. Is it from such trumpery pecuniary considerations as that that you have been induced to give the conveyance of your mails to German steamers, and that you have refused to give us the very small concession we ask for? I may say that anything more contemptible than this cheeseparing policy it is impossible to conceive. You have induced the local people to lay out £75,000 in the construction of a railway, and they have been compelled to see the works they have executed absolutely rotting for the sake of a few thousand pounds, when at the same time you are proposing to build an Imperial Institute at the cost of £250,000 or £500,000. You are investing enormous sums of money in non-productive works, when the lives of your sailors and your Mercantile Marine are in daily peril. Can anything be more preposterous? I thank the hon. Member for Banffshire for having brought forward the Resolution; I think he has done a great service to the country. So far as Ireland is concerned, he can scarcely realize the amount of service he has done, because he has given us the light of his official experience. Now that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) has turned economical—certainly a new phase in the political career of the Tory Party—I would point out that there is no class of investment which the country would so fully appreciate as the construction of these harbours of refuge. The money is not to be spent in war, or in the purchase of guns or of gunboats, but in making our harbours safe, so that our vessels, when off a difficult coast, may have somewhere to run to in the event of being overtaken by gales and severe weather. I appeal most earnestly to the Government to complete this harbour at Ross-slade. A better place could not at any time be proposed. I sincerely trust that the Government, in taking the question into their consideration, will not forget our little end of the country.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.): I desire to bring under the notice of the Government the dangerous positions of the shoals which exist in Cork Harbour. I believe that the shoals in question might be removed by a small expenditure of money in dredging, and money so expended would certainly not be thrown away.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. Member that the question he is now raising is altogether irrelevant to the subject now under discussion.

Mr. GILHOOLY: Then I will not press it further.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman the Member for Banffshire press the Motion?

Mr. R. W. DUFF: No; I ask the leave of the House to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

EMIGRATION OF PAUPER CHILDREN.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I rise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the purpose of calling the attention of the House to the Motion which stands in my name—

> "That it is expedient to relax the restrictions hitherto imposed by the Local Government Board on the emigration of pauper children, and to enter into negotiations with existing emigration agencies of established reputation, whereby such agencies may be empowered to emigrate pauper, orphan, neglected, and deserted children to Canada, or others of our Colonies, subject to reasonable regulations for the future oversight of the children."

It is a subject which has engaged my attention for several years. I have been closely connected for 13 years with one of the most successful experiments in the City of Liverpool in regard to the emigration of destitute children to Canada. In the course of that time 2,000 children belonging to the poorest classes have been happily placed and settled in comfortable homes in Canada, and 95 per cent of them have done well, are very much better off, and have succeeded in life far better than it was possible for them to have done if they had remained in this country. It is from the experience thus gained that I am induced to bring before the House the desirability of extending the advantages of organized emigration to Canada to the vast number of pauper children now being maintained by the State.

The average cost of emigration, including the necessary preliminary training and all incidental expenses, averages about £15 per child, while the average cost of bringing up a pauper child in this country is about £100. Allow for the cost of the establishments and the interest of capital sunk in the building, I believe that it is not too high a figure to put the cost of a pauper child in this country at £100, as against £15, which is the cost of each child removed to Canada. Therefore, on the mere ground of the interest of the ratepayers, and on the ground of economy, it seems to me that the plan I recommend has an enormous advantage over the system of maintaining pauper children in this country. It is not, however, simply upon this ground that I bring the question forward, but rather for the reason that the children so emigrated have a vastly better chance in life than they could have as pauper children placed out at home; nor is there any comparison whatever in the prospects of a poor child brought up by the industrious people of Canada with the prospects of the same child planted out in the centre of our large cities, surrounded on all sides by temptations, and exposed to degrading influences. I hold that this is a very large question.

The Local Government Board have under their control some 56,000 children; most of them orphans, or deserted children, who are being brought up in large district schools. In addition to these, there are over 25,000 children brought up in industrial and reformatory schools —children very much of the same class —so that altogether in England and Wales there are 82,000 children who are brought up at the expense of the State, whose welfare would be promoted very greatly by the scheme I propose. What I have to complain of, and what I have often charged against the Local Government Board, is that, although it has granted its consent to the principle of emigration, it has surrounded it with so many practical difficulties that, to all intents and purposes, the scheme has been rendered nugatory. The amount of emigration is so small that it is hardly worth speaking of. I believe that the total number of pauper children emigrated in four years amounts to 661—a mere drop in the bucket when compared to the 82,000 children under the care of the State. I wish to exonerate the right hon. Gentleman the existing President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) from any blame in the matter. I believe he is in entire sympathy with our views—that it is his full intention, if possible, to remove the defects which now exist, and to open the way to emigration. What I complain of is, that the action of the Local Government Board, during the last 10 years, has been such as to virtually stop the emigration of pauper children. I have been applied to myself in dozens of cases by Boards of Guardians for information as to how it is possible to obtain State aid in connection with the emigration of pauper children; I have referred them to the Local Government Board, and they have almost invariably written to me to explain that the conditions laid down by that Board have rendered it impossible for them to comply with them, and the result has been that the emigration of pauper children has been almost entirely stopped.

I wish to explain to the House how it comes to pass that the emigration of pauper children to Canada would in nearly every case be advantageous as compared with what takes place in this country. The advantages arise in this way. We have in Canada a thrifty peasantry, the owners of their own land —a farming population spread over a vast tract of country; these farmers, in many cases, have no children of their own, or, if they have children, they have grown up and have left them, having married and settled on their own account; for it is the custom in Canada to marry early. It comes to pass, therefore, that there are thousands of homes in Canada where there is no child, and it is a great object to this class of persons to obtain children, if only for the sake of company. There is no difficulty in placing thousands of emigrated children in happy and comfortable homes much superior to those that are open to them in this country; and in the rural districts, where there are no public-houses or low surroundings, they are removed from those temptations which are so seductive to children of that class. No difficulty whatever has been found—and I speak of my own knowledge—in placing young children, both boys and girls, in comfortable and happy homes in Canada. In many cases emigrated children have been adopted and made the heirs of their foster parents, and many of these poor children, drawn from the most destitute class, have now become possessed of considerable property in Canada. The cases of bad treatment are very rare indeed. The

Canadian farmers are kind-hearted, respectable people, nearly all of them church-going, and the children are usually placed under the charge of the neighbouring clergy. They are visited once or twice a-year by ladies who are appointed visitors, and they are placed especially under the care of the clergy. I believe it is almost impossible for cases of bad treatment to occur without our hearing of them. For the few cases of bad treatment which may occur we have provided a remedy. A depôt is kept open, and children who are badly treated can be returned to it. We require the farmers to sign an indenture by which they bind themselves to certain conditions as to sending the children to school and to church, and to give them wages after a certain period of service as well as undertaking to keep them well. We believe that, practically speaking, no risk whatever is incurred. In a short time the emigrated children forget their early associations, and by the time they reach manhood and womanhood they are to all intents and purposes indistinguishable from ordinary Canadian citizens, and their past lives appear to them to be little more than a dream. The question has been fully inquired into and examined by gentlemen on both sides of the Atlantic, and, as independent witnesses, they all testify to the advantages of our emigration scheme. Out of 2,600 children who have been emigrated by Dr. Barnardo, only 30 have turned out unsatisfactorily. Dr. Barnardo can put his hands on all the rest of those children and declare that they are getting on well and happily in Canada. I believe that other emigration agencies have had a similar experience, and have equally satisfactory results to give. I am acquainted more or less with nearly all of them, and I believe that it may be stated broadly that from 95 to 97 per cent of the children who have been emigrated have done well, and altogether some 10,000 or 12,000 children have been sent out since the work began. Let us compare this with the scheme of boarding out in this country. In Scotland pauper children have been boarded out with great success for many years. There is hardly such a thing as a pauper school in Scotland; but all the children are boarded out. In England pauper children are now boarded out on a very small scale, and I believe that wherever it has been done it has been attended with a large amount of success; but when we board out pauper children in this country we have to pay 4*s.* a-week for their board for several years. In Canada we are able to board them out for nothing. The farmers there are glad to get the children, and they soon begin to receive wages. Therefore, the cost in Canada is nothing as compared with this country. Again, in this country the children are boarded out with a very poor class of people—often labourers, who are struggling for existence themselves—whereas in Canada they are boarded out with well-to-do yeomen, owning generally 200 or 300 acres of land. They eat at the same table with their masters, and are treated in most respects the same as their own family. No one can doubt, therefore, that the homes we are able to find for these children in Canada are immensely superior to those it is possible to find for them in this country.

It may be asked—What is the opinion of the Canadian Government on this movement? I am glad to be able to inform the House that the Canadian Government, for many years past, has given the most favourable reports regarding the movement. The late Governor General (the Marquess of Lorne) has spoken highly of it on many occasions; and Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian High Commissioner, has, in my hearing, again and again expressed the highest opinion of the work. Times without number Members of the Canadian Legislature have expressed themselves most favourably towards this movement; and I am not aware of a single occasion on which an unfavourable opinion has been expressed in regard to it.

There are, however, certain conditions necessary for success; and I would point out to the President of the Local Government Board what those conditions are. It is a matter which requires careful management. We are dealing with young children who require delicate handling; and the point I wish to bring before the House is this—that we must make the children fit to enter good homes, and become good members of society, otherwise the Canadians will refuse to accept them. We cannot shift the overplus of our population to Canada or elsewhere without first of all converting it into good material. If we did otherwise, the result would only be a mortifying failure. It is our duty in this, as in every other honest bargain, to give to the Colonists the article they want; and what they want is children lovable, truthful, honest, and industrious, whom they can live with, and grow up with, and treat as members of their household. Unless we can give them children of that class they will not have them at all. Before we can render these children lovable we must put them through a preliminary training; and the training must be of that motherly kind, which relies most on the culture of the affections and conscience, as is the case with all children brought up in good homes. Unless we do that we shall never succeed. The success of our scheme depends upon this—that we do give this preliminary training in all our emigration homes, and we do not send out a child to Canada until we have satisfied ourselves that he will do credit to us, and that the Canadians will be glad to have him. That is the essential condition of the success of the experiment.

I have explained to the House the advantages derived from emigration to Canada; and now allow me to turn to the counter disadvantage which arises from the training of pauper children in this country. In spite of the best efforts to train pauper children the results have been very unsatisfactory. I believe there is no person in this House, who has paid any attention to the subject, who will dispute the truth of what I say. I ask permission to call attention to a very remarkable document published some 12 years ago by a lady deputed by the Local Government Board—by one of the Predecessors of my right hon. Friend opposite—to examine into the results of the training of pauper children. I allude to the Report of Mrs. Nassau Senior—a highly accomplished lady of a judicial frame of mind, who devoted a considerable period to the examination of the results of the training of pauper girls brought up in the neighbourhood of London. It never was my lot to read a more melancholy document; it is little else than a list—and a long list—of the most deplorable failures. This lady testifies that not more than one-fifth—or one-sixth—of the girls who passed through these pauper schools really turned out well in after life; that a considerable number turned out what she calls "fair;" but what she calls "fair" most of us would consider very unsatisfactory. An enormous proportion—some 50 per cent of the whole—appear to have turned out thoroughly ill. I would ask the House to read this paper, and I think they will agree with me that it would hardly be more cruel to many of these poor children to put them out of existence altogether than send them into the world so wretchedly equipped as were the bulk of the children who were turned out of the pauper schools of London 12 years ago. I will read a very few lines from the Report of Mrs. Nassau Senior, which, I think, contain the pith of the whole matter. Here is what she says—

> "It must not be forgotten that to girls brought up in the artificial surroundings of Government schools the entrance into life is far more trying than to a girl who has had natural training in a family, and the experience of every day life. It is difficult to realize how ignorant these girls are of things that are familiar to most children of a few years old. I hear it from the girls themselves, from their mistresses, from the matrons of Homes and Refuges, often even from the matrons who have done their best to train the girls in school. No artificial training, however careful, can teach a girl what she learns in family life without any apparent teaching at all. I have been told by mistresses that their own little girl of seven or eight is more handy, and can be better trusted to do an errand or make a small purchase, than their servant of 15 or 16 from the workhouse school. I mention this to show that great patience is often needed on the part of the mistress if the girl is to turn out well; and it follows that the utmost trouble should be taken to find mistresses likely to train and instruct their little servants with intelligence and gentleness."

In many cases the girls displayed an utter want of any sense of responsibility, either in regard to the value of property or the value of money; they had never been accustomed to handle money, and their conduct in many other respects was simply abominable. Now, I wish to state that at the time of Mrs. Nassau Senior's Report there was scarcely any supervision exercised by the Local Government Board over pauper children after they left school. But it has been most imperative in demanding a supervision over emigrated children, insisting on conditions almost beyond the power of any society to observe. As I have stated, at the period when this Report was written there was nothing in the shape of supervision worthy of the name, and it is a well-known fact, often told me by the Guardians of the Poor, that a large number of these girls went on the streets, and that of all the hopeless cases which penitentiaries had to deal with, those which came from workhouse schools were the worst.

I do not wish the House to suppose that I am charging all these evils on the system as it now exists. On the contrary, the publication of this Report led to a complete change. The girls belonging to the London workhouse schools have been placed under the charge of the Metropolitan Society for Befriending Young Servants—a very excellent institution—and within the last 10 years considerable supervision has been exercised over them. Therefore, a great change for the better has taken place since the period when Mrs. Nassau Senior wrote her Report. But, notwithstanding this fact, the testimony of the ladies who look after these pauper girls, who try to keep them from going wrong, and who follow them for several years after they leave the school — the testimony of all of them is to the effect that the equipment with which they enter the world is a very inadequate one, and that after all the training they have undergone they are less fit for the struggle of life than girls who have been brought up even in the poorest homes. I venture to read an extract from a letter of the Rev. Brooke Lambert—Chairman of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants—a benevolent gentleman, whose special attention has been directed to this matter. He says—

> "I am quite with you in wishing to see the children of paupers sent out of the country. The depletion of the labour market by the removal of these children would, quite apart from the benefit to the children themselves, do much for England. I have lately prepared a paper on the evil influence of parental control in the case of this class of children. Children are deserted and thrown on the rates until they come of an age when they can be usefully employed—that is, employed to earn money for their parents who have before abnegated the duties of parents—they are allowed to claim them, to the ruin of the children, and to the undoing of all the work done by the schools. But these (pauper) schools at best are a necessary evil, and your system is an undoubted benefit."

The effect of pauper training upon boys is not so bad as upon girls. The boys are able to stand knocking about in the world better; but even upon them the training is very unsatisfactory in its results. At an entertainment which was given in the East End of London some time ago, to about 1,900 lads of the destitute or unemployed class, those who came from pauper schools were asked at the close of the entertainment to stand up, and it was found that there were 1,400 lads who had been in pauper schools and are now loafing about the streets of London. Now it would be impossible to find in the whole of Canada so many destitute and unemployed lads. This fact illustrates the great difficulty we have to contend with in dealing with pauper children in this country. The difficulty we have to cope with is this—we have such an overstrained idea of parental rights and parental control that we allow these children, when they leave school, to return to the care of, and to associate with, tramps, thieves, prostitutes, and other degraded characters. Everyone connected with industrial and reformatory schools knows perfectly well that after spending, say, £100 upon a child in getting it trained and instilling into it proper principles, when it gets out of school it goes back again, in too many instances, to its old haunts of wickedness, and in the course of two or three years it is as bad as if it had continued there all its life. The great advantage of our scheme is that it places the ocean between the children and their degraded relatives. It entirely removes them from this country, where bad associations abound, and after a few years the children grow up as pure in their minds and habits as the ordinary Canadian children. The fact is that in this country pauperism is hereditary. Paupers beget paupers; the same conditions go on for generation after generation, and our system of dealing with this class of people perpetuates pauperism. And this state of things will go on from age to age unless Parliament takes it in hand, and determines to put an end to such a wretched and miserable failure. I have said already that the great evil we have to contend with is that we allow degraded relatives to get hold of the children as soon as they pass out of the schools. It is a strange things that in this country, such is our regard for parental rights, that we permit, in many cases, vagabonds and scoundrels to get hold of these children, with the consequence that they are utterly ruined for the rest of their lives. In America they have a far more rational plan. I can testify, from having read the laws of several of the States, that in America the neglect of duty which we find so common in England is punished by taking away from the parent the control of the child. In the United States the State does interpose, and it becomes the guardian of the child if the parent neglects his obvious duty. Thus the pauper children of 13 or 14 years of age, whom we surrender to the charge of degraded relatives, are in America put under the care of the State until they reach the age of 21. In the State of New York 51,000 children have thus been removed from vicious surroundings, and sent to the Western States, where they are found to do well. I wish to see extended to this country the same common-sense laws as are acted upon in America, and I hope the time is not far distant when we shall make some rational changes in that direction. Degraded and criminal parents ought no longer to have these children committed to their care.

I think I have said enough to show the enormous advantage of emigrating these children instead of pouring them out into our over-crowded towns to compete with a half-starved population, as we have been doing for so many years. In Canada there is a great demand for the labour of children, while there is nothing to correspond with it at home.

I wish, now, to say a word or two as to the largeness of this question; it is much larger than many people may suppose. The total number of pauper children maintained by the State in whole or part in England and Wales at the present time is 255,000; of course, the bulk of these are outdoor paupers; but, adding indoor and outdoor children together, they reach this enormous figure. There are also 25,000 in industrial and reformatory schools, 36,000 pauper children in Scotland, and probably 70,000 or 80,000 children of a similar class in Ireland. Therefore, the total number of children maintained at the present time at the expense of the State, in whole or part, in the United Kingdom, is nearly 400,000. In addition to this there are a great number of private institutions which maintain by benevolence more than 100,000 children in addition to the 400,000 maintained by the State. Therefore there are in this country altogether about 500,000 children who are being brought up at the expense of the community at a cost of not less than £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 sterling a-year. It will consequently be seen that the question is one of great magnitude, and I am sure that it must impress upon the House the importance of dealing with it in a statesmanlike spirit. If we had possessed the power, within the last few years, of emigrating these children in the way we are doing at present with the few we are permitted to deal with, what a difference it would have made in the state of the country! What an immense amount of crime, misery, and pauperism we should have prevented! The chronic condition of our large towns is that they are full of half-starved and destitute people. In the last few years the poorer classes have experienced a great increase in the difficulty of obtaining the means of living so far as our large towns are concerned. The pressure of life is becoming increasingly heavy. A very large class are dependent on charity. Everyone knows that in London destitution has been greatly increased within the last 10 years, and yet we go on pouring this enormous mass of pauper children into our towns, instead of scattering them wisely and thoughtfully over the thinly-populated Provinces of the Empire. At the present rate at which our population is growing in these Islands, if it continues until the end of another century, it will amount to 130,000,000; and in London itself, 100 years hence, there may be 25,000,000 inhabitants! Surely, then, we ought to welcome any means of spreading our population over our Colonies. I see great difficulties in the way of the State undertaking adult emigration on principles which would be safe, and which would avoid pecuniary loss; but I see no great difficulty in the way of dealing with these children, whom you can send to the Colonies, whom the Colonies are willing to receive, and who will assimilate themselves to the Colonial populations. There is no inherent difficulty in planting out almost any number of children in the Colonies of this vast Empire. Already private benevolence has sent out of the country and planted in good homes in Canada over 10,000 children; and one of the chief reasons why I feel so deep an interest in this question is that I see in the plan which we advocate a great relief to our over-crowded community.

Now I ask the Local Government Board to help us. I have been appealing to them for several years in connection with this matter, and their reply has always been the same. They have always professed to be in favour of the emigration of these children; but they have done very little to promote the work, the total number of pauper children emigrated being hardly worth talking about. I say that the Local Government Board is bound effectually to take up this work, and to find out a *modus operandi.* It is not for them to lay down impracticable conditions; but to find out how they can make the machinery work so as to send out to Canada within the next few years many thousands of these children. That is what I expect the right hon. Gentleman to do. If one Code of Rules will not answer, let him try another until the thing is done. There are two Rules in particular which hinder this work. The Local Government Board insists that the Canadian Government shall report annually upon all pauper children emigrated. Though only a few hundreds of those children have been sent out, yet a long delay elapsed before the Report was received. I am glad to know it is satistory. But I will undertake to prove that we have done far more in Canada for the inspection of our children than the Poor Law Board have ever done in this country. I ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board this—that the Guardians shall be allowed a discretion in this matter; to make small grants for the purpose of emigrating pauper children; that the restrictions I have referred to shall be removed, or, at least, that some Rules that will work efficiently shall be substituted. I am convinced that until this takes place nothing will be done; but we shall have one generation of pauper children in our great towns rearing another generation indefinitely. Then there is the Regulation under which children are only allowed to go to Canada direct from workhouse schools. My experience is—and it is the opinion of all who have had anything to do with pauper children—that there is nothing which has a more prejudicial effect on emigration work than this Rule, and that unless it is removed the whole scheme will be shipwrecked. I say let the Guardians be authorized to remove the children out of the workhouse schools, and place them in homes where they will be treated in a kindly and motherly way, and where their moral and religious nature will be developed prior to emigration. If that is not done there will be many failures which will prejudice the work in Canada. I hope that no children will be sent out of the country who have not been trained in such homes, and that all will be rejected by the emigration societies who are not found fitted for Colonial life.

My contention then is this—that, in the first place, the restrictions I have referred to should be removed; in the second place, that the children should be taken from the workhouse schools and sent to voluntary emigration homes where they will receive proper training and attention; and, finally, that the Boards of Guardians should bear the expense of this, which need not be greater than what is now paid in the case of workhouse schools with such indifferent results.

I thank the House for the attention with which they have listened to my appeal; and while I regret that I could not bring forward my Motion at an earlier hour, I am glad that I have been able to lay before the House a subject which has engaged the attention of some of the most wise and practical philanthropists in our country, whose plans I do not think the Government can do better than adopt. I hope we shall find that the Local Government Board will issue thoroughly practical instructions with regard to this question of child emigration, which I am convinced will do more to dry up pauperism at the roots than anything else that can be devised. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Resolution of which he had given Notice.

MR. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire, Arfon): I strongly endorse the appeal which has been made by my hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) to the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie). I have been engaged, like my hon. Friend, in this work of emigration, and I think it is very valuable, especially in the case of girls. I would point out to the President of the Local Government

Board and the House that if the real aim is a practical one they may safely leave the management of the undertaking to those voluntary societies already enrolled. My hon. Friend has described the kind of children which alone the Canadians would consent to receive, and the fact that the Canadians take these children into their homes and retain them as they do is, in itself, a proof that the voluntary societies have done their work well. But I go farther and say that when this work was begun, 25 years ago, we were unable to carry it forward with the same precautions as we are now. But I felt then, and I told the President of the Local Government Board of that day, that even without these precautions the children were exposed to much less danger, and had a greater chance of a prosperous and virtuous life, than they had in this country. These children are taken away from surroundings which cannot be considered healthful or beneficial to them and placed in others which afford them a reasonable chance of a comfortable and virtuous life. What hope of marriage is there for girls of this class afforded here? On the other hand, it is well known that their marriage is in Canada almost a certainty. To anyone who considers the conditions from which these girls are taken, I say it is clear that their prospects in Canada are infinitely better than they are in this country. It is within reach of such advantages that we should place these children; and, therefore, we contend that the Local Government Board should withdraw restrictions which prevent the attainment of this desirable object. Then there is to be borne in mind the effect which the emigration of pauper children will have upon those of the class who remain in this country. I have myself observed how the removal of even a moderate amount of labour has enabled those who remain to rise far higher than might have been inferred from the percentage of those who left. I will not detain the House at greater length than to urge upon the Local Government Board the removal of whatever restrictions are interfering with the work of the societies for the emigration of girls to Canada. If these are removed a very large number of children will be taken from what are called homes in this country, and placed in real homes in Canada. Sir, I beg to second the Motion of my hon. Friend.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "it is expedient to relax the restrictions hitherto imposed by the Local Government Board on the emigration of pauper children, and to enter into negotiations with existing emigration agencies of established reputation, whereby such agencies may be empowered to emigrate pauper, orphan, neglected, and deserted children to Canada, or others of our Colonies, subject to reasonable regulations for the future oversight of the children."—(*Mr. Samuel Smith.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Sir, I am sure the House will thoroughly appreciate the greater portion of the remarks of the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) in laying his facts before the House; and I am also sure that the purity of the hon. Member's motives in bringing this subject forward will not be disputed. It is the desire of the Department which I have the honour to represent, as far as possible, to encourage the emigration of pauper children to Canada. The hon. Gentleman says he does not speak on mere hearsay, and anyone who knows the interest which he takes in matters of this kind will be aware that he does not speak simply as a theorist. He is essentially a practical man, and has, therefore, the right to discuss this matter. There is another thing in which the House will agree—that, under proper regulations, great advantages follow from the emigration of pauper children. Not only is this beneficial to the children themselves, but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) has said, it is beneficial also to the community in getting rid of a large amount of labour which, in this country, cannot be profitably employed. But notwithstanding the manifest advantages which follow the course that the hon. Gentleman advocates, I think the House will agree that it is essential that the regulations with reference to the emigration of children should be so framed as to secure the benefit of the children when they get to the other side of the Atlantic, and that every precaution should be taken against the abuses which are likely to arise in the absence of such precautions. It is needless for me to point out what those dangers are. They must be perfectly well known to all who have studied these matters; and I am sure I shall carry with me the entire sympathy of the House when I say that although there ought not to be any restrictions which would unduly interfere with the emigration of these children, yet it is the bounden duty of the Local Government Board to see, in the interests of the children themselves, that certain conditions are complied with. The hon. Member for Flintshire spoke of the large number of children who are in our workhouses, as compared with the small number of children emigrated; he spoke of there being 56,000 children in the workhouses. But that at once raises a very important question. The immense majority of these children are neither orphans nor deserted, and the question which arises is as to whether the Local Government Board shall encourage by its regulations the emigration of children without the consent of their parents. For my own part, I say at once that I could not undertake to initiate any legislation which would have the effect of enabling the Guardians to emigrate pauper children in defiance of the wishes of their parents. I can sympathize with the opinion of the hon. Gentleman, that in a vast number of cases it would be for the benefit of the children that they should be taken away from evil surroundings, and from the evil influences of bad parents; but, on the whole, I think it is the lesser of the two evils to allow these children to remain here rather than to emigrate them without the consent of their parents, thus destroying that parental authority which, however abused, I believe the great majority of the people of this country desire to see preserved. I believe that if Parliament were to give power to Boards of Guardians to emigrate children without the consent of their parents, it would lead to such scandal as would be detrimental to the cause of emigration itself; and I am, moreover, persuaded that such a course would be repugnant to the feeling of the people generally. But, so far as the emigration of orphans and deserted children is concerned, I can assure the hon. Gentleman that my sympathy is entirely with him in this matter, and that anything I can do as President of the Local Government Board to put an end to unnecessary restrictions will be done. I think, however, that the hon. Gentleman is rather hard on the regulations imposed by the Local Government Board. The hon. Gentleman points to two regulations as being especially objectionable. One is the regulation which provides for the inspection of children by the Canadian Government; and the hon. Gentleman said that so long as we insisted upon inspection by the agents of the Canadian Government, so long would this emigration be entirely, or almost entirely, nugatory. I am bound to say that I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman there. It is perfectly true that in consequence of the Local Government Board not receiving Reports from the Canadian Government as to the children emigrated thither within the last year or two, they some time ago stopped the emigration of pauper children; but, as a matter of fact, owing to the season of the year, that action did not prevent the emigration of a single child, because, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the period of emigration was at an end. When the emigration season again set in, the Board had received the Report, and the bar which they had previously placed upon the emigration of children was then removed. Now, we consider that this Report of the Canadian Government is a very valuable one, inasmuch as it is altogether the independent Report of the agents of the Dominion. The Canadian Government express their entire willingness to undertake an annual inspection of all these children, provided their names, ages, and addresses are furnished to them. The regulation which the hon. Gentleman says interferes so much with the emigration of children is simply this, that the names, ages, and addresses of the children shall be sent to the Department of Agriculture of the Canadian Government, which shall report to the Guardians as to the condition of the children, and that the Guardians shall forward these Reports to the Local Government Board. Looking at the fact that the Canadian Government express their willingness to undertake this independent inspection, I think it is of considerable value that we should receive Reports from the Canadian Government by means of their agents, who make personal inquiries at the abodes of the children, and see whether they are well cared for. It is, therefore, unnecessary for us to do away with this regulation so long as the Canadian Government are willing to make that inspection. If there were a systematic attempt on the part of the Canadian Government or their agents to withhold these Reports, and if, in consequence of the Reports not being sent, we were to refuse to permit the emigration of children to Canada, then I admit the hon. Gentleman would be justified in the remarks he has made. But, as matters stand, we consider that the regulation has worked well, and led only to good results; and I do not anticipate that a single child will be prevented from emigrating in consequence of the regulation. The hon. Gentleman has referred to another restriction, and I am bound to say that there I think he has a better ground for objection. The second regulation which the hon. Gentleman points to requires that the children must have six months' training in pauper schools. I am by no means prepared to endorse all that the hon. Gentleman has said with reference to these pauper schools. It is true that the hon. Gentleman has quoted from statistics given by Mrs. Nassau Senior, in a Report which extends as far back as 1873, to show that the result of the training in pauper schools is not satisfactory. The results for the last year, however, show the existence of a greatly improved state of things. Of the children trained in these schools, 86 per cent are reported as "good and fair," 11 per cent as "unsatisfactory," and only 3 per cent as "bad." I think these are statistics of which the managers of the schools have every reason to be proud. When you have a number of children who are trained in the pauper schools, and it is found that of these only 3 per cent can be reported as bad, I maintain that it is not only a not unsatisfactory, but an altogether satisfactory state of things. I must take complete exception to the terms which the hon. Member applied to the training of children in these schools, when he said that they were not trained like human beings. The hon. Gentleman must know that the managers of the schools take an immense amount of interest in seeing that the training of the children is as good as it can be. The hon. Gentleman gave, by way of illustration, a statement of Dr. Barnardo, that out of 1,900 gutter lads assembled in his Refuge on a certain occasion, 1,400 declared that they had passed through pauper schools.

MR. S. SMITH: I said that there were 1,900 lads present, and that at the end of the entertainment Dr. Barnado asked those to stand up who had been at pauper schools, and that 1,400 stood up.

MR. RITCHIE: The hon. Gentleman said that 1,400 of these lads stood up, and the inference he desired to be drawn was that the training in the pauper schools was bad. But does the hon. Gentleman believe that out of those 1,900 lads 1,400 had undergone training? Is it not rather that a vast number of those lads may have been for a very short time in pauper schools—that the mothers and parents of those children having gone into the workhouses for a short time, in the meantime their children received some kind of instruction in pauper schools, but that they were not regularly trained there? I think it is impossible to say that these 1,400 lads can, in any sense of the term, be spoken of as having been trained in pauper schools. Now, with reference to the general question, I should like the House to understand clearly what is the position of the Local Government and Boards of Guardians in this matter of the emigration of pauper children. The Boards of Guardians are at perfect liberty to emigrate as many of these pauper children as they please, and through any agency which they please, so long as that agency complies with certain regulations of the Local Government Board. The Local Government Board does not directly interfere in the emigration of the children; they leave it, as I think they ought to do, to the Boards of Guardians, who are the proper authorities, to judge as to the agencies through which the children are emigrated, and to see that the regulations laid down by the Local Government Board are complied with. I have now dealt with the two regulations of which the hon. Gentleman complained. I repeat, as far as the regulation with reference to the Report from Canada are concerned, that I do not believe it has interfered with the emigration of a single child. I do not believe that the hon. Gentleman can give a single instance of a child being prevented from emigrating in consequence of the regulation which requires that a Report should be obtained from the Canadian Government. [Mr. S. SMITH dissented.] The hon. Gentleman shakes his head. I shall be glad if he will communicate to me the case of a single child who has been prevented from emigrating in consequence of that regulation. With regard to the other regulation, I think there is much more to be said. It is to this effect—

> "A child before being sent to Canada shall have been under previous instruction for at least six months in a workhouse or a district school."

Now, if that regulation is taken to imply that a child must have been in such a school for six months immediately prior to his emigration, then I think there is a great deal in the argument of the hon. Gentleman. I have spoken about training in workhouse schools, and I am prepared to defend it as being an admirable and excellent training; but I am prepared to admit that there is a workhouse taint upon those children who have been emigrated direct from a workhouse school. I certainly think it is possible and probable that those children, when they get to Canada, may be at a considerable disadvantage in consequence of having been emigrated direct from workhouse schools. That regulation I propose to amend. I propose to remove a further restriction upon Boards of Guardians which constitutes one of the objections to which the hon. Member alluded—namely, the restriction as to the number of children emigrated. That restriction was only intended to apply to the year in which it was issued—the year 1883—but as no other edition of these regulations has been issued since, I can quite understand that the Boards of Guardians may have thought that the restriction was still in force. I propose, therefore, to remove that restriction altogether. Then I propose to inform Boards of Guardians that they are at liberty to contract with any emigration agencies that apply to the Local Government Board and obtain a certificate as to the efficiency of their schools, so that the Boards of Guardians may send pauper children to those training schools for any time they think fit, and pay for their maintenance out of the rates. It is quite clear, so far as the ratepayers are concerned, that it is immaterial whether the education of the children is paid for at the district pauper schools belonging to the Union, or paid for at the schools of the various emigration agencies, while the advantage to the children themselves is obvious, for they will be able to obtain a certain amount of special training for emigration, and being sent out in conjunction with other children who have not been in the workhouse, they will be, so to speak, entirely without that workhouse taint which I think might be a great bar to their progress when they get to Canada. I think, so far as our proposal on that point is concerned, that it meets the objection of the hon. Gentleman. I believe also, when the powers of the Boards of Guardians are made known, the emigration agencies will take care on their part to make the Boards of Guardians acquainted with the facilities they offer; and, under these new conditions, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will see a very large increase in the number of children emigrated to Canada. I believe I have touched upon the various points to which the hon. Gentleman has alluded; I have shown that I am in absolute sympathy with him in the object he has in view, and that I intend to do my best to promote the emigration of these children under proper conditions, which will not restrict emigration, but will, on the other hand, afford a reasonable prospect of securing their welfare and prosperity.

MR. E. R. RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The right hon. Gentleman has made two important concessions, and he has done so with expressions of sympathy such as might be expected from his character and from the responsibility he must feel in the Office he holds. I will venture, however, to express a hope that the right hon. Gentleman may be induced to advance a little further; because it is most necessary, if anything substantial is to be done in the direction mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire, that there should be more elasticity in the Rules of the Local Government Board, and there should also be a disposition to advance in the matter of somewhat disregarding parental control. On a reference to the Rules of the Board, a great change will be found necessary with regard to inspection. The families where the children are placed object to a dual series of inspection. If the right hon. Gentleman will take a freer view of the matter, and be more disposed to rely on those institutions which are engaged in the work of rescue, for which he has expressed so much sympathy, he will soon see his way to a relaxation of the Rules. My hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire is, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, a really practical man, and it is of the greatest importance that Ministers of State, in dealing with men who have practically devoted themselves to the consideration of such subjects, should see with their eyes the difficulties that occur, and should make some concession to meet each case. This applies equally, though under circumstances of greater difficulty, to the larger principle of the sacredness of parental control, which I understood the right hon. Gentleman to assert almost, if not absolutely, without exception. It is a very large demand upon us to expect us to believe that under no circumstances can parents in this country forfeit the right to control the destinies of their children. Many of them have to all intents and purposes forfeited that right. I have myself passed through the right hon. Gentleman's present stage of feeling. I have gone into the matter, both in Liverpool and in the City a Division of which I have the honour to represent, with preconceived ideas both that to relieve parents of their children would tend to generate pauperism, and that to remove children from their parents' control is flying in the face of nature; but the more I looked into the matter the more I found that this is a mere chimerical difficulty which will have to be faced and got over. If the right hon. Gentleman will consult those who have to do with the work of rescue in Liverpool and in Glasgow, he will find that they do not appreciate the great difficulty of ignoring parental control. They believe that in such cases, with small assistance from the State, it may be got over; and that so far as the parents are concerned the great majority of them are—where it is necessary for the State to interfere — cases where parental feeling has died out, or, at any rate, has fallen into a condition which does not require much consideration at the hands of the State. I asked a gentleman in Glasgow whether penal consequences might not be brought to bear upon the parents with success. He told me that it could not; that the parents spend much of their time in prison, and simply regard a visit there as a sort of sanitary operation from which they derive benefit and are enabled to resume their deplorable kind of life. When dealing with such people it is carrying consideration too far not to try to find out some way to carry on the experiment in which my hon. Friend and other philanthropists have had so much success; and I believe that the Local Government Board may easily invent methods for making greater progress in inducing parents, or even in over-ruling their objections, where so much depends upon it for the future of the country.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): It seems to me the discussion, so far, has only proceeded on one side of this question, and that hon. Members who have spoken have altogether failed to take into consideration the circumstances of the Colonies to which it is proposed to emigrate these children, and what may be the effect of continued artificial emigration to these Colonies from this country. The hon. Member for Flintshire has spoken of the enormous number of children who are in this sad and deplorable state of pauperism; he says that there are 500,000 in the United Kingdom, and that if the population of London continues to increase in the next century as it has hitherto increased it will amount to 25,000,000. But if the system of emigration which he proposes be carried out, we shall find that the population of Canada will become a population or colonization of paupers. There are, no doubt, too many pauper children in the country, and the question is how that evil is to be remedied. I doubt that the country is equal to acceptance of the Utopian theory of the hon. Gentleman at the present time, and I am, therefore, of opinion that some other remedies must be adopted. It seems to me that the proposal of the hon. Gentlemen is to take out of the country those who have as good a claim to remain there as any other portion of the population. We forget that the

Colonies to which we propose to send these children are already very crowded, and that many persons cross into the United States because they cannot find employment in Canada; and that the large cities of Australia furnish a parallel, but in a smaller degree, of the state of things which exists in London. I have myself seen persons who, having emigrated to Melbourne and Sydney, have been obliged to sleep without cover in those cities because they were unable to find employment. It is most unjust and absurd to emigrate these children. If the State côuld find some employment for them, such as would be practicable under a tobacco monopoly, for instance, it would be better than a general scheme for getting rid of the surplus population of the country. The children are reduced to their present condition mainly owing to the neglect of their parents, and you say that, therefore, the parents have forfeited all claim to have control over them. But what are the laws of the Colonies? They provide in almost every case against the immigration of paupers; and although those laws are sometimes relaxed, they will be stringently enforced as soon as it is seen that a system of private or State emigration is established here. The suggestion of the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) appears to me to be altogether insufficient, and the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board has practically left the matter where it was before, for I do not apprehend that the relaxations which the right hon. Gentleman promises will encourage the new system of emigration. They may remove a few restrictions; but I am glad to observe that the Government does not see its way to go into any enlarged emigration system, which would certainly be resented by the Colonies to which the children are proposed to be sent.

MR. S. SMITH: I wish to say that I am much indebted to the right hon. Gentleman for the way in which he has met us. Although I cannot agree with all his remarks, I desire to make this acknowledgment, and will now ask leave to withdraw my Resolution.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

POST OFFICE—EXERCISE OF OFFICIAL PATRONAGE.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): The matter of Post Office patronage, to which I desire to call attention, is one which excites a great deal of interest in the country; but I think I shall be consulting the feeling of the House if I postpone its consideration to a more favourable opportunity. I shall, therefore, content myself with moving the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr Conybeare.*)

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I sincerely hope the House will not agree to the Motion of the hon. Member, and I am extremely surprised that the hon. Member should have taken this course on the present occasion. When he first gave Notice of a Question on this subject he avoided putting it to me in the House. Subsequently the hon. Member gave Notice something like a month ago of his intention to bring forward a Motion impugning the administration of my Department. He had an opportunity of bringing that Motion forward on the Supplementary Estimates which he did not make use of, and on the evening when he might have done so he was not in his place. After having had the present Notice on the Paper for more than a month the hon. Member again takes the first opportunity of running away. It seems to me that an hon. Member who takes that course with reference to the Motion he has placed on the Paper is wanting not only in consideration to those concerned, but also wanting in respect for the House. The hon. Member has again the opportunity which he sought or appeared to seek of bringing forward his Motion, and he declines to make use of it.

MR. CONYBEARE: Sir, may I be allowed to make a personal explanation? The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General would not, I am sure, deal with me unfairly if he could help it. I have not dealt with him unfairly, and I do not wish to do so; but he has animadverted on the fact that on the former occasion on which it was possible for me to raise this question, with regard to which I had placed a Question on the Paper, I was not in my place. The right hon. Gentleman has not stated to the House that which he will, perhaps, permit me to state—namely, that I sent him a Notice before my Question was reached to the effect that I did not intend to proceed with it that evening, for the very good reason that I understood that another hon. Member intended to proceed with the matter in a more systematic and complete manner. That was the sole reason I did not proceed with the subject that evening, and the fact that I was not in my place when the Question was called on was due to this consideration—that having given the right hon. Gentleman Notice that I was not going to put my Question, and as he did not intimate that he would insist upon giving an answer, I had left the House before it was reached. With regard to the Supplementary Estimates, I do not recollect whether I was in my place or not when this subject could have been dealt with in connection with them; but I was in my place the whole time we were discussing the Estimates during the All-night Sitting. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that I am not going to "run away from my guns." I am perfectly prepared to go on with the matter at this moment if the Government insist upon it; but I really think it would be in the public interest that we should not go on with it to-night. It would be much more to the public interest that the discussion should take place at such a period when we should be likely to have it reported in the newspapers, which is not likely to be the case at the present moment. It has been insinuated by the right hon. Gentleman that I am afraid to go on with the discussion. I am not afraid, but I would remind him that if we do not proceed with it now we shall have ample opportunity of doing so when the Post Office Vote comes before us.

Mr. STOREY (Sunderland): The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General is never so happy as when he is heroic. He is in his most heroic humour to-night. At 1 o'clock in the morning, in an attenuated House, he calls upon my hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall to address himself to a question of considerable moment, and he amuses himself by remarking that my hon. Friend has "run away from his guns." The best answer to that is that my hon. Friend is sitting here on my right hand at this moment, and has got all his guns —and big ones they are—behind him, and is perfectly ready to stand to them. Mr. Deputy Speaker, for my own part, I do not know much about the Motion my hon. Friend proposes to move, but I have one feeling about this matter. I am quite prepared, as I think most hon. Members who have been in the House for a few years will know, to support any Government, whether it be Liberal or Tory, in making progress with Public Business at a convenient time; but I would tell the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of this House, who happens to be in his place, that at 1 o'clock in the morning I am, upon principle, an Obstructionist. I think it is extremely inconvenient that at 1 o'clock in the morning, a time when all decent people are in bed, we should be debating in this House questions of great moment; and though if my hon. Friend chooses to go on with his Motion I shall be prepared to sit here to give him what support I can, I do beseech the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House to consider that the hour is 1 o'clock in the morning. [The hon. Member here paused for some time. *Cries of* "Order!"] I am waiting until the Chancellor of the Exchequer has finished his conversation with the Leader of the House. I should like to point out to the First Lord of the Treasury that, under the new Rule which, when we get our senses, we are going to vote—which all hon. Members, no matter where they may sit, are going to support—we are going to finish all Business at half-past 12 o'clock. I humbly submit, therefore, that, out of consideration for the delicate nature of our constitutions, the right hon. Gentleman ought now to allow us to adjourn. I strongly support the proposal of the hon. Member that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House will assent to this Motion. There is a Notice upon the Paper in which I myself feel a considerable interest—a Motion dealing with the relative cost of the Irish, English, and Scotch police. In the discussion which will take place upon that Motion I hope to be able to make some disclosures of a very important character. It is impossible to go into such a matter as that at this late hour of the night. If the Motion of my hon. Friend were to be brought on to-night, it would afford us still another reason for desiring the adjournment, because this is the only occasion, under the new system which has been adopted, on which private Members can bring forward any grievance which they think of importance. It seems to me that the general opinion of the House is that the Government should agree to the adjournment of the debate.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I entirely agree with the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) that it would be most reasonable that we should go to bed at half-past 12; but I would remind hon. Gentlemen that that arrangement can only be arrived at by having reasonable regard to length of speeches, and also to the importance of questions raised in debate. I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree to that condition. Under existing circumstances, I would submit that, at this hour of the evening, there is yet time to consider the Motion which stands on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall. Another hon. Member opposite has referred to his desire to discuss another Motion which stands upon the Paper. I would remind that hon. Member that the questions he proposes to raise are questions which can be raised on the particular Vote to which they relate. There is no reason whatever why the question the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Conybeare) desires to raise should not be raised on the Post Office Vote itself.

Mr. CONYBEARE: The Postmaster General does not want it so raised.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: Then, to satisfy the Postmaster General and the hon. Member for Camborne, I am quite willing to sit here for some time longer.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I have sat here the whole evening with many of my hon. Friends around me, and I do not think the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House can complain of the part we have taken in the debates. We have left them entirely, or almost entirely, to English and Scotch Members. I have sat here the whole evening waiting for the very important Motion which stands on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Wednesbury (Mr. P. Stanhope) to come on. If the Motion of the hon. Member for Camborne is disposed of, that Motion will be discussed. It is a Motion which it is very proper to bring on in the shape of an Amendment to the Motion that you, Sir, do leave the Chair, because it is a matter raising very serious questions, and questions in which hon. Members from Ireland have for a long time taken great interest. We have been endeavouring for years to bring the scandals it deals with under the notice of this country, and at last an English Member has been so struck by the facts of the case that he has been moved himself to take it up. I wish to point out that if the debate on the Post Office is to go on now we shall be obliged to have our debate on the Motion of the hon. Member for Wednesbury afterwards. For my own part, though I am not desirous of staying up to a very late hour, if the Leader of the House desires that we should do so in order to go on with these matters I shall be quite willing.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): I would venture to point out that I am interested in a Bill which is down for second reading to-night—namely, the Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill. That Bill is not blocked, and it will not take five minutes to discuss it; but I am afraid that if we go into the discussion of these Post Office questions to-night we shall not be able to take the second reading of that measure.

Mr. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): I would remove a misapprehension from the mind of the hon. Member who has just spoken. It is quite true that I have removed the block from the second reading of his Bill, but it is my intention to oppose the second reading, and when that stage comes on it will be necessary for me to ask the indulgence of the House for some little time.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House gets up remarkably fresh, not having been here during a greater portion of the debate, and thinks it is quite fair to go on with the Motion with regard to the Post Office. I think the right hon. Gentleman in this matter might have some regard for the views of the rest of the House as well as for his own. A great many hon. Members have been in close attendance all night, while the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has been away enjoying himself somewhere else. [*Cries of* "Order!"] If I am out of Order in saying that the right hon. Gentleman has been enjoying himself I withdraw the expression. The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General said that because my hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall proposed an adjournment at a quarter past 1 he was "running away from his guns." I do not think that that is a statement which ought to come from a Minister of the Crown. I think it is very disgraceful indeed that because an adjournment is asked for on a Motion of this kind the person asking for it should be accused in this most wanton and almost insulting manner of running away. If there is any running away it is more likely to be on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General, because he expressed a very strong desire that my hon. Friend should go on with his Motion now. Why does the right hon. Gentleman evince so much anxiety for the Motion to come on now? It is because he knows that there are few Members in the House, and because he knows that the Motion, if gone on with at this moment, is not likely to attract the attention which it would have attracted if it had come on at a more reasonable hour; it is also because he knows that at this hour the discussion would not be reported at any great length in the morning papers. Of course, the Postmaster General is very much interested in this Motion, dealing, as it does, with his position and conduct in the Office he fills. Under the circumstances, I think he ought to accede to the reasonable request which is now made to adjourn. By doing that he would show the House that he is not only prepared to meet the statement about to be made as to his Office, but that he is anxious that the statement should be made, and made publicly, before a full House, and when there would be an opportunity for the newspapers to report the debate. Under these circumstances, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House ought to give way. If he does not give way my hon. Friend will go on with his Motion, though it is very hard lines that the Leader of the House should come down and, not having been in the House all night, insist upon our going on with the important debate at this unreasonable hour in the morning.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): The real question before the House is whether the right hon. Gentleman has got his 200 Members to back him or not. If he has not, of course we can continue to debate this question; but if he has, he had better put us out of our pain at once. So far as the Motion of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall is concerned, I should like to hear it debated. My sympathies are all on the side of the Postmaster General; and if it comes to giving a vote on the matter, my vote, I think, will have to go for the right hon. Gentleman, and not for the hon. Member for Camborne; because whenever a question comes on between a preaching gentleman like Mr. Stephenson Blackwood and the head of a Department I shall always vote against the preaching gentleman.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I take great interest in the Motion which is down later on the Paper; but I do not share the views of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), who desires to sit up here all-night to debate it. I would very much rather that it came on at a reasonable hour of the night, when one could listen to and take part in a debate with some sense of comfort; and I would, therefore, appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House to consent to the adjournment.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I understood from the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury that this Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall would be equally well raised on the Vote for the Post Office as on the question that the Speaker do leave the Chair. I think the right hon. Gentleman suggested a reasonable course, because the hon. Member who intends to bring on the Motion does not feel disposed to proceed with it at this hour. He wishes to bring it on at a time when it can be properly discussed in a full House. If the Motion were discussed to-night, the debate would not be reported in to-morrow's papers. I know nothing about the merits of the case between the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General and Mr. Stephenson Blackwood. I have no sympathy for Mr. Blackwood. I know nothing about him, and I care nothing about him; but I remember the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General in the position you now fill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I must say that, as far as my memory serves me, I have not since seen anyone in that position who filled the Office with more ability. Under the circumstances, without prejudging the case against the right hon. Gentleman, I must say I think it is too late to bring the Motion forward. It is unreasonable to expect a new question to be discussed at 20 minutes after 1 o'clock in the morning, and I do not think we should be asked to make arrangements to suit such a condition of things. I would in all cases protest against it. One reason why I would like to see the matter disposed of is that I now see the hon. and learned Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) in his place, and we may have an opportunity of raising the question of jury-packing in Ireland, which is involved in a Motion he has on the Paper. I have a very strong opinion that the hon. and learned Member would quite as soon not bring forward the Motion at all. If the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) is forced to go on with his Motion, the probability is that many hon. Gentlemen will leave the House, and that there will be few remaining to listen to the debate on the subject of jury-packing in Ireland.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 65; Noes 128: Majority 63.—(Div. List, No. 87.)

Main Question again proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."

MR. CONYBEARE rose to address the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member has already spoken.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland) then rose.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: And the hon. Member for Sunderland seconded the Motion.

MR. STOREY: As a matter of fact, Sir, I did not second the Motion.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then I call upon Mr. Storey.

MR. STOREY: Sir, I make no secret of the fact that a Member of the Government just now said privately to me—"I thought you never did it." I freely admit I never do it; but I repeat what I said about 10 minutes ago, that at 1 o'clock in the morning I am an Obstructionist. I entirely object—my physical state compels me to object—to sit here after this hour of the morning. I am willing to do the work that my constituents send me to do; but since the moment I came into the House I have never, except on extreme occasions, sat in the House to late hours. I cannot do it. [An hon. MEMBER: Then go home.] An hon. Member opposite says to me, "Go home;" but I humbly submit to the Conservative Party that that is not exactly what we want in this House. What we want is a temperate expression of opinion from all sides of the House. I do not often trouble the House; but I am bound to say I have consistently objected to the continual attempt to bear down any minority by the power of a majority at half-past 1 o'clock in the morning. I do not insist upon it; but I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith), as one common-sense man to another, to consent now, at half-past 1 o'clock in the morning, and especially in view of the fact that even if the Motion of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall be disposed of, there is at least one other Motion on the Paper of very considerable importance, which will occupy the attention of many hon. Gentlemen from Ireland for several hours, to the Motion which I now make, that this House do now adjourn.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Storey.*)

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) has made an appeal to me which I shall not resist. It is clear to the House that the Government, at all events, have been anxious to make progress with Public Business. The Government are always anxious to make progress, and I am sure hon. Gentlemen who have been present throughout the evening, as I have been, with the exception of one hour, must be aware that greater progress might have been made this evening than has been made. We have recorded our protest. We think it our duty to do the best we can to forward Public Business; we have been prevented from forwarding Public Business; we have made our protest; and if the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Storey) will withdraw the Motion for the adjournment of the House, I will withdraw the Motion that the Deputy Speaker do leave the Chair.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): I only wish to make one remark in reply to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith). I wished to make some observations earlier this evening; but, seeing that the question was being fully discussed, I abstained from doing so, and I believe other hon. Members did the same. The right hon. Gentleman has said that the Motion I intended to bring forward was one which might just as well be discussed on the Estimates. I differ from the Leader of the House. If I were to open up the question which I have to open up in the course of the discussion on the Estimates it would not receive the slightest notice outside the House. I wish to make the Motion I have put upon the Paper in order to draw public attention to what I consider a scandalous matter. I do not wish to continue the discussion now, but merely to express my obligation to the right hon. Gentleman for the concession he has made.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): We have had a lecture from the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. H. Smith); and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) has spoken about the common sense of the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Gentleman might have said that common sense was very commonplace. The right hon. Gentleman will not clôture us to-night, but will reserve that for another night.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House will profit by the lesson which he has been taught. He has not got his "Six Hundred" present.

Mr. STOREY: In asking leave to withdraw my Motion I wish to thank the right hon. Gentleman for his courtesy in accepting my proposition.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I beg to withdraw the Motion that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do now leave the Chair.

Original Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I desire to thank the Government for their courtesy in acceding to our request, and to assure them that what they have in view—namely, the promotion of Public Business—we have in view also. If my Motion had come on at this early hour of the morning I should have felt obliged to take the opportunity of reproducing the whole question on some more favourable occasion, so that the House would have had to listen twice to what I have to say.

Supply—Committee upon *Wednesday.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.—[Bill 1.]

(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Jackson.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 24th March.*]

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee be deferred till To-morrow."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I should like to know what the object of the Government is in putting this Bill down night after night. They have chosen to bring in a Coercion Jubilee Bill, which is to be taken to-morrow. To put down this Bill for to-morrow, too, appears to me to be extremely inconvenient. I therefore suggest that after "To-morrow" the word "week" be inserted.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): It i possible the hon. and learned Member (Mr. T. M. Healy) has overlooked the fact that the Bill has been put down for to-morrow to meet the convenience of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler).

Mr. T. M. HEALY: What about our convenience? Have we no convenience?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the hon. and learned Member persevere?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I ask the Government not to put the Bill down for to-morrow, because by the time it arrives for consideration we shall all be exhausted.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): As an arrangement has been made to take the Bill to-morrow it would hardly be proper to alter it now.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Committee *deferred* till *To-morrow.*

METROPOLITAN MANAGEMENT ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

(*Mr. Octavius Morgan, Mr. Gilliat, Mr. Kimber.*)

[BILL 166.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to ask the House to agree to the second reading of this Bill, and if it were not for the lateness of the hour (1.50) I should venture to trouble the House with some figures as to the history of the constituency I have the honour to represent. Battersea has grown more rapidly than any other district in the Metropolis; but I will not adduce all the statistics I have prepared. I will simply say that in 1855, when the Metropolis Management Act was passed, Battersea contained a population of 12,000 only, and had a rateable value of £90,000. To-day the population is 140,000, and its rateable value £650,000. In 1855 Battersea was only a 223rd part of the Metropolis, to-day it is a 36th. We, therefore, ask to be transferred from Schedule B in the Metropolis Management Act to Schedule A, which transference will give us direct representation on the Metropolitan Board of Works. If we are placed in Schedule A, out of the 26 parishes included in the Schedule there will be only nine with a larger population than Battersea, while 16 will have a smaller population. I think, therefore, we are fairly entitled to this change, in favour of which I have had the honour of presenting a Petition from the Wandsworth District Board of Works, and from the Battersea Vestry. There are one or two clauses in the Bill which will require alteration, but the alterations have been already agreed to by the Home Office.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Octavius Morgan.*)

MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): No one can regret more than I the circumstance that I have to detain the House at this very late hour by any remarks in opposition to this Bill; nothing but the consideration that I am performing an imperative duty in opposing the Bill would allow me to trouble the House with any observations at this hour. It becomes my duty to let the House know, in as few words as I possibly can, what the object of this Bill is. The object of the Bill is to add another to the already too numerous Governing Bodies of London—in other words, that the parish of Battersea, which now forms part of a District Board of Works, should be taken out of Schedule B of the Metropolis Management Act, and converted into a Vestry. I wish hon. Gentlemen to know what will be the effect of that operation. You will create another Governing Body in London. You will make one Corporation more. You will confer upon this body corporate a seal, and you will create another set of officers—a vestry clerk, engineer, surveyor, medical officer of health, and a host of inspectors and other servants. What is the present position of Battersea? It forms now a component part of the Wandsworth District Board of Works, which embraces the parishes of Wandsworth, Battersea, Clapham, and Putney, all very well grouped geographically for being combined into one Governing Body. The facts to which my hon. Friend (Mr. Octavius Morgan) has referred—namely, the great increase in the population, and the great increase in the rateable value, do not alone constitute a sufficient reason for the action he proposes the House should take. I have another reason why I think this Bill should not be allowed to pass. I object very much to treating the government of London in the piecemeal fashion which this Bill proposes to do. The question of London government in its entirety must come before the House sooner or later. It is a question which many Governments have attempted to legislate upon. I think it is reserved for the Government now in power to submit a scheme of London government to the consideration of the House, and I hope the House will not increase the burdens of the ratepayers until the whole question has been considered. It would be manifestly unjust to the parishes which would be left in the Wandsworth District Board of Works if they have to bear the burdens which the present Bill seeks to impose upon them, and to incur the expense of the officers and servants whom they now have, whilst the parish of Battersea would be relieved therefrom. On the other hand, it would be unfair to the inhabitants of Battersea that they should be called upon to create a distinct Governing Body for themselves; that they should be put to the expense of building a vestry hall or a town hall, and be obliged to maintain a separate set of officers. Under these circumstances, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I rise to support the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! Does any hon. Member second the Amendment? [*Cries of* "No!"]

[The Amendment, not being seconded, was not put.]

MR. KIMBER: I represent the other parishes which my hon. Friend (Mr. Isaacs) behind me—[*Cries of* "Agreed, agreed!"]

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee of Five Members, Two to be nominated by the House, and Three by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented not later than three clear days before the sitting of the Committee be referred to the Committee, and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, and Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Octavius Morgan.*)

PHARMACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [*Lords*].

(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

[BILL 210.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I rise to move the second reading of this Bill. Of course, at this time of the morning, I shall not go into any detail, but merely state to the House that the measure is promoted by the Pharmaceutical Society in the public interest. It is very necessary that chemists and druggists, who have to make up our medicines, should receive a competent training before going up for examination. The general tenour of the Bill is that the candidates for the diploma of the Pharmaceutical Society shall be obliged to attend lectures upon botany, chemistry, and *materia medica,* and be compelled to go through a practical training for three years. I submit that this Bill is distinctly in the public interest, and I hope the second reading may be now agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I regret very much so important a Bill should be brought forward at 10 minutes to 2 in the morning, and I trust my hon. Friend (Dr. Farquharson) will not press the second reading. The object of the Bill is to give additional powers to the Pharmaceutical Society; to give the Society, in fact, powers and privileges with which such a body ought not to be vested. Up to 1868 anyone could carry on the business of a chemist and druggist; but in that year a register of chemists and druggists was drawn up, and an examiner was appointed by the Pharmaceutical Society to give a qualification to all who practised as a chemist and druggist. Now, the Society wish to go further—they wish to be empowered to create a curriculum, and to compel those who desire to trade as chemists and druggists to pass in chemistry, botany, and *materia medica.* If the Society were so empowered, the chemist and druggist trade would simply be made a very close corporation, because the chemists and druggists in small towns and poor neighbourhoods will be unable to qualify. In large places like London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, where you have courses of lectures on botany, chemistry, and *materia medica,* it will be quite easy for students to attend the courses and qualify themselves. Up to the present time, all you have asked for is that those who practise as chemists and druggists should know something of their business. To go beyond that, and allow this body to determine a curriculum, and compel persons to go through that curriculum, will be to limit the trade to a small number of men who will make a monopoly of it. In the next place, I am opposed to the principle of the Bill. I think that all we have to do for the benefit of the public is to see that men who practise as chemists and druggists should pass a proper examination. To allow the Pharmaceutical Society to lay down a curriculum is beyond the province of legislation. By passing this Bill we should be giving up the principle of Free Trade altogether, and we should be limiting the selling of drugs to a very small and select class. If we intend to grant any power of this kind to any Body, it ought to be to some public Body, and not to a mere society of traders who can make their own bye-laws, and whose bye-laws would have all the effect of an Act of Parliament. If my hon. Friend (Dr. Farquharson) perseveres with this Bill, I shall be compelled to endeavour to amend it so as to make the Pharmaceutical Society representative of the 12,000 persons engaged in the chemist and druggist trade, and not merely of the 2,000 members of the Society. I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months. There is no necessity for any change in the present system. The Pharmaceutical Society have passed certain rules or bye-laws which are practically illegal, and now they are asking this House to give them power which they ought to have possessed before making the bye-laws.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, W. R., Holmfirth): I beg to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I think we must support this Bill, and for the reason that it will assimilate the English and Scotch law to the law of Ireland. The law in Ireland has undoubtedly worked well. It is said there is something very severe in compelling attendance at certain lectures before examination and certification; but I think, on the contrary, it is very beneficial to the persons concerned. Everyone knows that it is a very common practice for men who have to pass examinations to go to some crammer, who fills their minds with bits of information, and that Governing Bodies, knowing that this dangerous practice has to be encountered, are often in the habit of making examinations unnecessarily severe. If, however, Governing Bodies know that those presenting themselves for examination must have gone through a preliminary course of study, they are more inclined to let the examination partake more of a common-sense examination than otherwise. I do not think the operation of this Bill will work hardly upon any individual. The rights of old practitioners as chemists and druggists are already safeguarded under the main Act; and it is only proper, in the interest of the public safety, that men who have no qualification whatever should not have the right to dispense most powerful poisons.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not rise for the purpose of opposing this Bill; on the contrary, I mean to support the Bill as far as I possibly can. There are several points in connection with the Bill which have not obtained that amount of due consideration to which they are fairly entitled. At the present time there is a great deal of discontent, because the rights of many chemists and druggists in England have not been properly respected. From time to time I have received communications from chemists and druggists, in which the writers point out that if this Bill is passed without due deliberation and proper debate, they will be placed in a position which it is quite certain the promoters of the Bill will admit is nothing else but regrettable. I sincerely hope a compromise may be arrived at. Instead of pushing the second reading of the Bill through the House to-night, perhaps it would be better if it were postponed, say, until next Thursday, or, if the House does not adjourn for Easter, until some day next week. When the second reading comes on again clauses may be submitted which will enable a great number of people who are employed as chemists and druggists, but who might be deprived of the employment by which they now find the means of livelihood, to continue their trade. There are a great many points in connection with this Bill which I should like to bring under the notice of the House, but as the hour is now so very advanced I will not do so. I sincerely trust, however, that the second reading of this Bill will be deferred for some days.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 76; Noes 22: Majority 54.—(Div. List, No. 88.)

Main Question put, and *agreed to*.

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *To-morrow*.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND).—JURY PANELS.—OBSERVATIONS.

MR. GEDGE (Stockport): Sir, I have the following Notice on the Paper:—

> "To call attention to the present mode of framing the jury panel and selecting jurors in Ireland, and the reasons given for the same, and, in connection therewith, to the alleged jury packing in past and pending cases; and to move, That the present system of framing the jury panel and selecting jurors in Ireland is complicated, and has often failed to secure a jury which could be relied upon to return a verdict according to the evidence, and therefore needs amendment, yet that the charges of jury packing in recent cases have not been substantiated."

I stated at an earlier period this evening that if I were able I should certainly bring the matter forward to-night. As at this time it is too late to have a discussion, I will state what I propose to do. When I gave Notice of this Motion the matter was of considerable importance, so much so that the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) had a Notice on the Paper dealing with the Question from his point of view. But since this Notice of mine was put on the Paper the Government Bill for the Prevention of Crime in Ireland has been presented to us, and has been printed and circulated, and, on looking at that Bill, I see that——

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I rise to Order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is the hon. and learned Member entitled to refer to a Bill at present before the House?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member is entitled to refer to it, but not to discuss it.

MR. GEDGE: The subject-matter of my Notice, or Resolution, will be much more conveniently discussed on the second reading or in Committee of the Government Bill, which touches the same subject—therefore I do not propose to proceed with my Motion.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Has the hon. and learned Member moved the discharge of his Motion?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not necessary. He does not move it—that is all.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I wish to say——

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no Motion before the House.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then I move that this House do now adjourn, and I do it on this ground. We have been night after night led astray by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport. He has put down this Motion relating to the Irish jury system, and has kept us here until late at night to watch it, preventing us in that way from doing other work. I think that, under the circumstances, a Motion for the adjournment of the House is the proper course to take—therefore I move it.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to second that Motion, and I do it because I desire to say that the conduct of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) is in the highest degree objectionable; and before I sit down I shall ask you, Sir, to say whether his proceedings, in view of the recent ruling of Mr. Speaker, are not an abuse of the Rules of this House? The hon. and learned Member, at an earlier period of the evening's Sitting, informed me—I dare say, Sir, you were in the House and heard it—that if he got an opportunity, he would bring his Motion on to-night.

MR. GEDGE: I said I would bring the matter forward.

MR. DILLON: I leave it to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the House to say what was the impression conveyed to the House by what the hon. Gentleman said. I do not for a moment propose to contradict the account the hon. and learned Gentleman has given of the statement he made; but, whatever the words he used may be, the impression conveyed to me, and to every sensible Member of this House without exception, was that if he got an opportunity to-night, he would bring forward his Motion. Now, what has been the course adopted by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport? Why, he has put his Motion on the Paper for the deliberate purpose of preventing us from bringing the subject forward—of preventing us from discussing or even alluding to the subject with which his Motion deals. He put his Motion on the Paper when another Motion had been withdrawn, and I am entitled, I think, to declare, looking at his line of conduct in this matter, that beyond all question, in the eyes of every frank and honest man, that was the object he had in view in putting his Motion on the Paper. Hitherto I have abstained from attributing that motive to him. [*Interruption.*] I do not know what hon. Gentlemen opposite may think as to the propriety of that motive; but I maintain that the hon. and learned Member's statement this evening fully entitles me to say—whether or not he himself considers it an improper one or not—that it was with that motive that he placed his Motion on the Paper. Now that he has an opportunity of bringing on the Motion he deliberately withdraws it. I would ask him, on the question of adjournment, whether he proposes to put this Motion on the Paper again, or whether any hon. Gentleman in collusion with him will put a similar Motion on the Paper? After what has occurred, I shall take another opportunity—perhaps one more favourable than the present—of appealing to you, Sir, or to whoever occupies the Chair, to rule whether such a course of proceeding as that which has been pursued by the hon. Member is not an abuse of the Rules of this House, in view of the ruling given by the Speaker on a previous occasion? I myself and other Members of our Party are personally and most vitally interested in this subject of Irish jury panels, and yet the hon. Member has gone out of his way to prevent us from alluding to the matter in the House. I consider the conduct of the hon. and learned Gentleman has been extremely unfair, and I trust that the course he has adopted will not be followed by other hon. Members. We have abstained on this side of the House from pursuing that course; but if this sort of conduct is to be repeated by supporters of the Government I think we have shown on previous occasions that two can play at such games. We can put down a series of Notices at some future time which may have the result of preventing hon. Gentlemen opposite from bringing on discussions which may be of great moment to them; and in this way, through the conduct of the supporters of the Government, a state of things will be brought about which was characterized in one of the public newspapers the other day as proceedings more worthy of sharpers on a race-course than hon. Members of this House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn.—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I rise to support the protest made by the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon). I venture to think that the hon. and learned Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) has given no adequate reason for the course he has just pursued. Surely it is not a proper thing for an hon. Member to put on the Paper such a Notice as that of the hon. and learned Member for Stockport, and then to decline to move it as he has now done. We all know the object with which it was put down. I ventured to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) what course the Government would pursue in the event of the Resolution of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport being brought forward; and the right hon. Gentleman, in this House, informed me that as soon as the Resolution was moved the Government would state fully their views on the matter. I would point out that we are now precluded from hearing the views of Her Majesty's Government on this very important subject. I venture to say that not only the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport, but also the Government, by not using their influence with their supporter—and we all know the influence they possess—have not been treating the House with proper respect in this matter.

Mr. GEDGE: I rise to support the Motion for Adjournment. I consider that at a quarter past 2 o'clock in the morning I might very well have excused myself from going on with this Motion without assigning any other reason. But I thought it better to give an honest, *bonâ fide* reason. At the time I put my Motion on the Paper, the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) had not, I believe, withdrawn his Notice of Motion which stood on it. If he had done so I was not aware of it. My Notice was put on the Paper with the intention of discussing the matter as soon as an opportunity arrived for so doing. No opportunity has presented itself up to the present time, and meanwhile the Government Bill for the Amendment of the Criminal Law of Ireland has, in my opinion, rendered the discussion of my Resolution unnecessary. It would have been out of Order for me to give this explanation in reply to the Question put to me a few hours ago. That was the reason of my conduct, and I submit that I have acted in a perfectly straightforward manner, and in accordance with the Rules of the House.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): The right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) accuses me of running away from my guns. I wonder what he would have said about his supporter, the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport, if he had known about this transaction? I rise to support the protest of hon. Gentlemen behind me, and in order to express the opinion—which I think will be shared by many on this side of the House—that it would only have been candid on the part of the hon. and learned Member for Stockport if, when he was challenged earlier in the evening as to what he intended to do, he had given the same reply as he has now given. It is obvious that the reply he made at an earlier period of the evening could have only one construction placed on it—namely, that he did intend to bring this matter forward for debate. If he had had the frankness to state the *bonâ fide* reason he has given now at half-past 2 o'clock in the morning, it would have saved hon. Gentlemen on this side a great deal of trouble. It would have saved many of them from the trouble of sitting here all the evening expecting his Motion to come on. If the hon. and learned Member would learn to treat hon. Gentlemen on this side with a little more frankness, it would contribute more to the harmony of our proceedings.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I hope the House will not adjourn until we have received some assurance that hon. Gentlemen opposite, who have of late indulged in the practice of putting Notices of Motion down for the purpose of really preventing discussion upon the subject of the Motions, will desist from doing so. The hon. and learned Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) referred to his Motion in the most flippant manner; but we are entitled to know whether it is not an abuse of the Forms of the House for an hon. Member to put down a Notice of Motion upon a subject in which he takes no interest whatever, simply for the purpose of preventing discussion? The practice is certainly one which ought to be stopped. If the right hon. Gentleman the Speaker could have foreseen the consequence of his recent ruling, I question whether he would ever have given it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is not entitled to pursue that line of argument.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: I will not pursue it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman must withdraw the statement.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: Certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will withdraw it, though I am not quite conscious of the statement I have to withdraw. With all respect to the right hon. Gentleman the Speaker, I only wish to point out that his ruling was quite different to the ruling of Mr. Speaker Brand.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is the statement I have requested the hon. Gentleman to withdraw.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: Oh! Is that the statement? Then I withdraw it. I will only say that we have a new state of facts before us, by means of which any Member of the House may, by adopting a certain line of conduct, stamp out all discussion upon a given question. The practice on the part of hon. Members opposite to which I have referred is, I submit, an abuse of the Forms of the House, contrary to the spirit of the ruling of the Chair, and one which we are entitled to protest against.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I think the matter which has been brought to the attention of the House deserves a word from the Ministerial Bench. Members of the Government are very ready and flippant with their reproaches towards hon. Members on this side of the House; but I think they would do well to set their own house on their own side of the House in order. If the course of the hon. and learned Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) is what he calls a candid and straightforward course, I must have a very crooked eyesight indeed. The hon. Member thought it right to put down a Motion relating to one of the sorest grievances in Ireland. The question of jury-packing is one which we have sought times out of number to bring to the notice of the House. We have done so not for the purpose of delay or obstruction, but because the question is a sore and burning one in the opinion of our people. I shall not go into the merits of the question; but I do desire to mark as much as I can my emphatic protest against what hon. Members on the Tory Benches are pleased to call fair play and fair dealing. I make them a present of their idea of fair play. Hon. Members sitting near the hon. and learned Member for Stockport seem to be delighted with the great tact displayed by the hon. and learned Member; but it is false tact to put upon the Notice Paper a Notice of Motion like this, and flaunt it in our faces night after night. If the hon. and learned Member is satisfied with his arguments, why does he not give us an opportunity of debating the question? We are physically capable of debating it, and the hon. and learned Member himself seems sprightly enough. Why does he not move his Motion? If he is such a wonderful tactician, why does he not enter the arena of advocacy? I do not care to use the words which would best express the feelings I entertain of the tactics which hon. Members opposite have resorted to—no doubt, they are proud of their performances; but I think I am very near the truth when I say that their performances to-night will retaliate with vengeance on themselves. The Ministers of Her Majesty will some day have reason to regret that they have sat silently by while their supporters have made the proceedings of this House a means of insulting the Irish people.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) has done me the honour of making a personal reference to me. Early in the Session I had a Motion on this subject on the Paper, and the hon. and learned Gentleman has said that when he placed his Motion on the Paper he was not aware that I had withdrawn mine. I can hardly reconcile that statement with the fact that, if my Motion was not withdrawn, he must have known it was as good a one for raising the subject as his. My hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) endeavoured to raise the question of jury-packing in Ireland, and I withdrew my Motion on the next day, when it was well known the hon. Member for East Mayo would endeavour to return to the subject. The Motion of the hon. and learned Member for Stockport immediately appeared on the Paper, and applied the gag to the mouth of my hon. Friend. The House is aware that at that moment the liberty of my hon. Friend the Member for East Mayo and of three other hon. Members of the House was directly concerned in the subject of the Motion. I make the hon. and learned Member for Stockport a present of any self-congratulation he can feel as the result of the course he has pursued. I assure him he has taken a course which one hon. Member of this House rarely takes towards another hon. Member. He has taken a course which is not envied by any other hon. Member now present, for I assure him that, whatever may have been his purpose, the effect of his course has been very pitiable and contemptible obstruction.

Mr. MAURICE HEALY (Cork): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hold in my hand a copy of this year's *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, and from under the heading "Sydney Gedge" I extract the following passage, which I presume was supplied by the hon. and learned Gentleman himself:—

> "A Conservative, but in favour of 'freedom of trade, freedom of contract, freedom of bequest, freedom of speech, and freedom from State and municipal interference with individual action and enterprize.'"

I will not comment on the amount of candour which the hon. and learned Member has exhibited in explaining the motive which has led him to put this Motion on the Paper of the House. I am afraid he will not find many hon. Members of the House so simple as to be prepared to accept in all its nakedness the statement he has made on this subject; but I take the liberty of saying that, in my judgment, the hon. and learned Gentleman might have selected some other method of displaying his desire for freedom of speech than by placing a Motion on the Paper of the House plainly designed for no other purpose than to smother deliberate expression of opinion on a topic of great public importance.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: In asking leave to withdraw the Motion, I only desire to say that, as outside we apply the term "fishy" to transactions of a questionable character, in the House we had better apply to such transactions the term "Gedgey."

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

House adjourned at half after
Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 5th April, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Select Committees—Army and Navy Estimates, *debate adjourned;* Admiralty and War Office (Sites), *nominated.*

Public Bills—*Resolution in Committee—Ordered —First Reading*—Companies Acts Consolidation and Amendment * [218].

Ordered — First Reading — Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (1886) Amendment (No. 3) * [219].

Second Reading — Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [217] [*First Night*], *debate adjourned.*

Select Committee—Merchandise Marks Act (1862) ment * [142], *nominated.*

Committee — Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) [184]—R.P.; Pharmacy Acts Amendment [210], *debate adjourned.*

INDISPOSITION OF MR. SPEAKER.

The Clerk at the Table informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, and of his unavoidable absence from the House this day.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, Chairman of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the Standing Order.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BELFAST CORPORATION (LAGAN BRIDGE) BILL [*Lords*].

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I protest against this Bill being rushed through the House with headlong speed. The second reading was taken almost without Notice, and the Report of the Select Committee was only circulated this morning. I object to this style of doing Business, although it is characteristic of the method pursued by the Belfast Corporation in regard to all their legislative measures. This is a Bill in which my constituents are very much interested; and I beg to move that the debate be adjourned.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the Bill is opposed, in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House it must go over until to-morrow.

Mr. SEXTON: Then to-morrow I shall repeat the Motion I have just made.

Bill to be read the third time *To-morrow.*

QUESTIONS.

PATENT OFFICE COMMITTEE—REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the published Minutes of Evidence, accompanying the Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the working of the Patent Office, comprise the whole of the Evidence laid before that Committee?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Committee in question was appointed to inquire into the duties, organization, and arrangements of the Patent Office under the Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Act, 1883, having especial regard to the system of examination of the specifications which accompany applications for patents under that Act. The Report and Evidence has been presented to Parliament. The Committee were also asked to make confidential inquiry into certain questions relating to the staff and internal regulation of the Patent Office. The Evidence taken on this head is hardly of a character which it would be consistent with the interests of the Service and the usual practice in such cases to make public.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK asked, whether the Board of Trade intended to make a Report on that portion of the Evidence which it was not their design to publish?

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: Yes.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—VOLUNTEER CORPS—AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS.

Mr. ATKINSON (Boston) asked the Secretary of State for War, If he will arrange for the annual audit, under the supervision of the Government, of the accounts of Volunteer Corps?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): If my hon. Friend will do me the honour to read my recent Memorandum, he will see that I deal with this subject in it; and it is intended shortly to issue Regulations in regard to it.

BURMAH (UPPER)—POSITION OF AFFAIRS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, What is the present position of affairs in Burmah; if the submission of the country is complete, and now accessible to British commercial enterprize; and, if the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and other troops, who have taken part in the operations under Sir Frederick Roberts, will receive batta allowances?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): The submission of Upper Burmah is at present complete, and the country is accessible to British commercial enterprize; but as several of the principal dacoit leaders have not been captured disturbances may be renewed in some places in the rainy season. No recommendation for batta allowances has been made by the Government of India, with whom the initiative rests.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—OXFORDSHIRE MILITIA.

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, instead of calling out the Oxfordshire Militia for their 27 days' training on the 13th of June, an earlier day can be substituted, most of them being agricultural labourers, who would otherwise, after a winter in which employment has been very scarce, be deprived of the small addition to their wages which they are able to earn during the hay harvest?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The 4th Battalion Oxfordshire Light Infantry has usually been called out for training in the middle of June, and the officer commanding has not had any complaint from his men that the season is inconvenient. On one or two occasions the battalion was trained in May, and the men then disliked the cold weather. It is believed that the balance of advantage lies with the season now chosen; but it would hardly be possible to select any period for training which would not inconvenience some members of the corps.

INDIA (FINANCE)—DEFICIT ON THE NET REVENUE OF INDIAN RAILWAYS.

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to a widely-circulated statement in the Press, to the effect that the Budget of Sir Auckland Colvin shows a loss of between £1,000,000 and £2,000,000 sterling on the net revenue of the Indian Railways; whether that statement is correct; and, if incorrect, can he give the actual or approximate result of the working of those Railways?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): The excess of payments over receipts in the Revenue Account of Indian Railways is estimated in Sir Auckland Colvin's Budget for 1887-8 at Rs.1,38,37,000, or less than £1,000,000 sterling. The payments are enhanced by the fact that capital for the earlier lines was borrowed, or guaranteed, at 5 per cent, and that interest is being paid on lines which are not yet opened. The general result of the working of Indian Railways is not unsatisfactory. During the last year for which the Returns are complete, the net earnings on State lines amounted to 5·53 per cent on the total capital outlay; on the Great Indian Peninsula to 6·72 per cent; on the Bombay Baroda to 8·07 per cent; on the Rajputana Malwa to 6·97 per cent; and on all the Railways opened in India together to 5·91 per cent.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"EGAN *v.* DWYER"—ASSAULT.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the report, in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 30th instant, of the proceedings in the Woodford Petty Sessions Court on the 28th instant, of the case of "Egan *v.* Dwyer," in which the plaintiff, who is a Poor

Law Guardian, charged Dwyer, who is under police protection, with having twice assaulted him with a heavy whip on the public highway, and in the presence of the two policemen who were acting as his body-guard; whether the Bench unanimously, and in strong language, condemned the action of the constables and Dwyer, and fined the latter 40*s.* and 10*s.* costs, the Chairman saying he would send him to prison only he was drunk; whether the Government intend to take any, and what, steps with regard to the two policemen inculpated in this case; and, whether they will continue to give a special police guard, at considerable expense to the public, to Dwyer?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I have seen a report of this case. It is true that Dwyer was convicted of having assaulted Egan. The police, however, who were present, positively swore that they did not see him use a whip in the manner stated. It is not a fact that the Bench condemned the action of the constables. I am informed that they made no remark whatever on the subject. Dwyer has been cruelly "Boycotted" for a long time past; and the circumstances of this case would not justify the Government in withdrawing from him the protection which he unfortunately requires.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: Was it not admitted in Court that the man was drunk and furiously driving; and, as these are offences known to the law, I ask whether the police were justified in being present and allowing him to do this?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The police, as I have told the hon. Gentleman, did not see him commit this assault. If he means that the police ought to have prevented him being drunk, I do not see how it was in their power.

ARMY (AUXILIARY FORCES)—THE VOLUNTEERS AT ALDERSHOT.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether, having regard to the practical impossibility for Volunteers engaged in business to know in April whether they will be able to be exercised with the Regular Forces at Aldershot for seven days in August, the time for submitting the Return of those willing to go can be extended from 1st May to 1st July?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): As far as military arrangements are concerned, it is immaterial whether the date is extended from May 1 to July 1; but it is believed that the alteration suggested would be inconvenient to the Volunteers generally. The number of Volunteers to be exercised with the Regular troops at Aldershot in August is limited to 3,150 of all ranks. The invitations have been sent out to all Metropolitan corps, representing over 20,000 men. A selection has, therefore, to be made; and to enable Volunteers to make their plans in good time (according to this selection) it is desirable that it should be made early, and even earlier than usual this year in consequence of the many special events taking place. If my hon. Friend can call at the War Office at any time the Quartermaster General will be happy to discuss this matter with him in detail.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS (SCOTLAND)—CITY EPIDEMIC HOSPITAL, ABERDEEN.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been called to the recent accidental death, under distressing circumstances, of one of the patients in the City Epidemic Hospital at Aberdeen, and to the complaints made as to the management of that Institution; and, whether he proposes to direct any public inquiry into its management, or to take any other steps, with a view to testing the complaints referred to?

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Lord Advocate, in view of the sad accident which occurred recently at the City Hospital in Aberdeen, and the responsibility now attached to Local Authorities under the Public Health Acts, Whether the Government will consider the advisability of placing public hospitals under regular Government inspection?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): My attention was called to this case by the hon. Member and by the hon. Member for East Aberdeenshire. On inquiry, I found that the Procurator Fiscal had already, in the ordinary course of duty, made a full investigation, and I received a Report from him. The Public Health Committee of the Aberdeen Town Council have also made a full inquiry, the Report of which is printed. I was satisfied, from the Procurator Fiscal's Report, that there was no case for a criminal prosecution; but that a grave indiscretion had been committed in not having the unfortunate woman sufficiently under observation when suffering from fever, which might at any moment develop delirium, and in her not having been more frequently visited by the medical attendant after the accident. The Report of the Public Health Committee confirms these views; and I am glad to learn that the Town Council of Aberdeen have, in consequence of that Report, asked the Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh to advise them as to the future arrangements of the Hospital, with a view to place the Institution in which the accident happened in a more satisfactory state. As the proper authority is evidently alive to the importance of the matter, and is attending to it in an efficient manner, I do not propose to take any further steps. In reply to the hon. Member for East Aberdeenshire, I have to say that this is a question of general policy, which cannot be conveniently answered unless longer Notice is given.

FRANCHISE (IRELAND) EXTENSION, 1885—COMPENSATION TO POOR LAW UNIONS.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is the intention of the Government to compensate the Poor Law Unions of Ireland for the expenses incurred by them in connection with extension of the franchise in 1885; whether, in view of the high local rates in Ireland and the generally distressed condition of the unions, he will consider the advisability of relieving the rates by making these expenses an Imperial charge; and, whether he can inform the House how many Poor Law Unions in Ireland have passed Resolutions protesting against the imposition of the charge on the local rates?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Questions on this subject have already been answered this Session, and I can add nothing to former replies. As the Irish Government are advised, the proposal of the hon. Member is one that could not be carried out without legislation. It is one which concerns the whole Kingdom, rather than Ireland exclusively; and it is a question more for the Treasury than for the Irish Government whether they would sanction the introduction of a Bill for the purpose of legalizing the proposed payment. I am aware that Resolutions to the effect stated have, from time to time, been received from a number of unions.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: I will address a Question to the Secretary to the Treasury on the subject.

EGYPT—ASSAULT ON TWO ENGLISH OFFICERS.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) had the following Question on the Paper:—To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Government have any information regarding a case in Egypt, reported in *The Times* newspaper, in which two young British officers, out shooting, hit and wounded some natives, and, in a consequent struggle, one Native was killed by the discharge of a gun; if he can say whether it is correctly reported that the natives concerned in the affair have been summarily tried and punished, some Sheiks and others been subjected to corporal punishment and other severe penalties; what the Court was which tried the case, and how composed; under what law they acted, Egyptian or British; whether the corporal punishments were immediately carried into effect; and, who are the military warders who carried out the sentence?

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co. Mid) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whethe the report appearing in the morning papers of Tuesday, 29th March, is correct—namely, that two English officers, Messieurs Scollard and Leith, belonging to a regiment stationed at Cairo, while on a shooting excursion in the vicinity of the Pyramid of Ghiza, wounded an Arab by accident; that the Arabs and fellaheens thereupon demanded satisfaction; that, subsequently, one of the officers is alleged to have killed another Arab, literally, as given in *The Daily News*, blowing his head off; that, in the fracas which ensued, the officers in question received rough treatment at the hands of the Arabs and fellaheens, but were saved from any serious injury by an armed guard; that, subsequently, a number of these natives were taken prisoners for having attacked the officers in question; that these men were brought before a military tribunal, when the following sentences were passed—namely, nine men, including two Sheiks, to receive from 10 to 50 lashes each, one Sheik to undergo six months', and several men eight days' imprisonment, and the Sheik of the Pyramids is fined £100; that these sentences were executed subsequently by military warders, 60 mounted police, and 100 men of the regiment, under arms, to which the officers belonged; and, whether the Government will recommend an inquiry into the circumstances of the case?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N. E.): The Secretary of State for War requests me to reply to a Question of the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner), which refers to the same matter as that of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. Her Majesty's Government have not yet received a full Report of what has occurred, for which, indeed, there has not been time; but if the House will allow me, I will read that part of a letter from the Lieutenant General Commanding in Egypt which relates to it, and the substance of a telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring. These documents will enable the House to understand more accurately the nature of the occurrence. Sir Frederick Stephenson writes as follows:—

> "It appears that two young officers of the Welsh Regiment were out quail shooting, near one of the villages on the left of the road leading to the Pyramids, when a native working in the fields was accidentally struck in the forehead by a single pellet from one of their guns. The officers at once compensated the native, who appeared perfectly satisfied; but on returning through the village they were mobbed and assaulted by the inhabitants, who attempted to take away their guns, and in the struggle one or both the guns exploded, killing one native and wounding another. The villagers, who were in large numbers, overpowered the officers and maltreated them very severely, striking them when on the ground, and treating them with the greatest indignity; they remained for nearly an hour, with their hands tied behind their backs, and, as I understand, with ropes actually placed round their necks; in short, they fully expected to have been murdered; but some police, whom one of their shekarries had fetched from a neighbouring village, arrived in time to prevent further mischief. I may mention that about a week ago an Italian, a medical man, out shooting, in the same neighbourhood I believe, with some friends, had also been assaulted by the natives, and in the struggle lost his life by his own gun going off and lodging its contents in his side. As far as I can gather from what I have heard the assault seems to have been a most aggravated and unjustifiable one; for the native who had been struck appears to have been quite satisfied with the compensation he had received. I have no reason to believe that the officers were in any way to blame; they did what officers have been ordered in the event of any misunderstanding arising, when out shooting, with the owners of the land they may be shooting over—namely, make known to them who they are and give their names. The Sheiks of all villages throughout the country were warned by the police authorities, about a year ago, that, under similar circumstances, they were upon no account to take the law into their own hands, but to ask for people's names, with a view to their complaints being inquired into and compensation awarded if necessary."

Sir Evelyn Baring, telegraphing on the 29th of March, stated that no blame appeared to attach to the officers, who would seem to have behaved very well. The affair would be inquired into at once by a Special Commission, to consist of two Egyptian and one English officer, and, if necessary, the offenders would be punished. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy asks under what law the Commission acted. Both the telegram I have just read and obvious reasons point to the understanding that the Special Commission appointed to inquire and adjudicate in the case, acted under Egyptian Law; but we have not received any Report as yet of the result.

Dr. TANNER asked, how it was that these natives were brought before a military tribunal, receiving from 10 to 50 lashes each, inflicted by English military authorities?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, that as soon as the Report was received he should have no objection to communicate it. At present, he could not answer hypothetical Questions without information.

Dr. TANNER said, he would put down the Question at any time to suit the convenience of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. LABOUCHERE wished to know whether any indemnity was to be given to the unfortunate Arabs who, whilst riding their camels on the high road, were suddenly shot by officers, who said they were shooting quails?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he had already stated that one native was struck with a pellet whilst working in a field, and that compensation had been paid.

In reply to Mr. T. M. Healy (Longford, N.),

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON said, he thought it would be wrong to anticipate the Report, or answer on imperfect information.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MAJOR CROFTON, J.P.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Major Crofton, of Mohill Castle, in reference to whom a notice recently appeared in *The Dublin Gazette*, still retains, and will be continued in, the Commission of the Peace for the County of Leitrim?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Under the circumstances mentioned, Major Crofton has, by statute, become disqualified from acting as a magistrate; and, consequently, his name will not be retained in the Commission of the Peace. The usual notice has been sent to him by the Lord Chancellor.

WAR OFFICE—PRINCE OF WALES'S REGIMENT — PROMOTION OF SERGEANT MAJOR PRESTON.

Mr. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether Sergeant Major Preston, of the Prince of Wales's Regiment, has been promoted to the commission of Quartermaster; and, whether Sergeant Major Hartrie, of the second battalion, is senior to Preston; and, if so, what is the reason for Preston's promotion?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Sergeant Major Preston has been promoted to the rank of Quartermaster. With reference to the second Question, I have to say that, in the interest of military discipline, I consider it highly undesirable that Questions of this nature should be asked in the House of Commons, and still more so that they should be answered.

COAL MINES—INSPECTORS OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been directed to the case of "Share *v.* Stewart," in the Airdrie Sheriff Court, in which judgment was given by Sheriff Mair, on Tuesday, 22nd instant, to the effect that, under "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1872," and "The Weights and Measures Act, 1878," the local Inspector of Weights and Measures is not bound to inspect the weights used in any colliery unless the miners or the masters pay his travelling expenses, and the cost of carriage of his weights; whether the weights in the instance in question were found to be wrong in four different collieries, and the master prosecuted and fined; whether, under section 17 of the Act of 1872, where the miner is to be paid according to the weight of the mineral, the mineral is to be accurately weighed; and, whether, in view of the great importance of this matter to the miners of Scotland, he will make provision that the Commissioners of Supply, by whom, in Scotland, the Inspectors of Weights and Measures are appointed and paid, shall cause the Inspectors to visit the mines, and examine the weights in use?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, his attention had been called to the case cited. Under the Weights and Measures Act an Inspector was not bound to go himself or carry his weights to any place where the weights were supposed to be wrong. On the occasion in question, weights were found to be wrong in three collieries; but in two of them the steel yards were in favour of the miners. In each case where the weights were wrong the master was prosecuted and fined. He had laid the Coal Mine Regulation Act Amendment Bill on the Table of the House making provision for the periodic inspection of weights and measures.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR asked, whether the miners would have a right to have the examination carried out without expense, where they showed reasonable cause?

Mr. MATTHEWS apprehended that that would be the fact. A six months' inspection would be made, and the Inspector was also required to make an inspection at any time when reasonable cause was shown. The cost would be defrayed under the Weights and Measures Act Amendment Bill by the Local Authority.

CYPRUS—MR. MAVROGORDATO.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether Mr. Mavrogordato, an officer in the Cyprus Police Force, has applied for letters of naturalization, and been refused on account of objections raised by the Colonial Office; whether Mr. Mavrogordato, who is not a subject of the Porte, is the husband of an English wife, and the son of an English mother; whether he has been in the service of the Crown for five years, holds his appointment under a gazetted Commission from Her Majesty's High Commissioner in Cyprus, and has taken the official oath "to serve faithfully Her Majesty the Queen, her heirs, and successors;" whether the gazetted appointments in the police, such as Mr. Mavrogordato holds, are only seven in number; and, whether he will consider the expediency of placing Mr. Mavrogordato, as a servant of the Crown in Cyprus, in a similar position to Her Majesty's alien servants elsewhere in respect to the privilege of letters of naturalization?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead), in reply, said, it was true that the Secretary of State for the Home Department refused a certificate of naturalization to Mr. Mavrogordato, in accordance with the views expressed by successive Secretaries of State for the Colonies in similar cases. The Act provided that the Secretary of State—

> "May, with or without assigning any reason, give or withhold a certificate as he thinks most conducive to the public good, and no appeal shall lie from his decision."

But there was no reason why he should not state the grounds upon which the objection was based—namely, the peculiar conditions of the administration of Cyprus, which was still part of the Ottoman Dominions. Mr. Mavrogordato, in his Petition for Naturalization, stated that he intended last May to marry an English lady; but they did not know if he had carried out that laudable intention. They did not know his nationality of origin, or that of his mother. Mr. Mavrogordato has been for over five years in the service of the Cyprus Government, and now holds an Inspectorship—or Assistant Inspectorship—of Police, an appointment of which a notification appeared in *The Cyprus Gazette.* As such an Inspector he took an oath of service, in which the words quoted in the hon. Member's Question occur; but which is limited to service in Cyprus, so long as he holds a commission in the military police. There are about 28 posts in the police (not seven) to which appointments are gazetted.

ADMIRALTY — PROSECUTION OF MR. YOUNG TERRY FOR BETRAYAL OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether any decision has been arrived at as to the prosecution of Mr. Young Terry for the betrayal of official information; whether the Government have come to any decision to introduce a Bill in the present Session to bring this and similar offences within the scope of the Criminal Law; whether the Admiralty have issued, or about to issue, more stringent Regulations for the guidance of its officials upon the subject, and to further secure the country against traitorous public servants; and, whether such Regulations, when issued, will be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): We do not propose to prosecute Mr. Young Terry for the offence he has committed. Her Majesty's Government intend, as soon as the Business of the House will permit, to introduce a Bill for the purpose of enabling more stringent punishment to be given for such offences, and we are considering what Regulations shall be adopted with regard to confidential matter. The hon. Gentleman will see that it will not be advisable to lay such Regulations on the Table of the House, because the publicity thus occasioned might defeat their object.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—JUDICIAL RENTS—RETURN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the monthly Returns for January and February last of judicial rents fixed in Ireland, and the quarterly Return, up to 31st March ultimo, of agrarian offences reported to the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary, will be circulated in time for use in the debate of the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The quarterly Return of agrarian outrages will, I hope, be laid on the Table this week. I have communicated with the Land Commissioners as to the probable date of the presentation of their Reports for January and February; but the Question having been put on the Paper without Notice, I have not been able to get a reply.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND) — THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—COLONEL FORBES, R.M., AND MR. M'CARTHY, R.M.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, considering the importance attached to the Commissioners on the Belfast riots to local knowledge of Belfast in suppressing disorder there, and the length of time during which Colonel Forbes, R.M., and Mr. M'Carthy, R.M., have been stationed in Belfast, the Government will postpone their final decision as to the removal of these officials until their entire scheme for the preservation of social order in Belfast is submitted to the House?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I understand that Notice was sent some time ago to the two gentlemen in question, that they were to be transferred to other localities, so that, practically, the final decision has been clearly taken.

MR. SEXTON: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether, although the Royal Commissioners insisted upon the importance of local knowledge of Belfast on the part of the Resident Magistrates who have to deal with disorder there, the Government will persist in removing two magistrates who have local knowledge and replacing them by two magistrates who have none; and, whether they will do this while postponing action upon all the other recommendations of the Commission?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I have already informed the hon. Gentleman, a final decision has already been come to—I think nearly two months ago.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to give Notice that, at the earliest opportunity, I shall, in the name of my constituents, protest against the adoption of this course, and point out the danger with which it is attended.

MARRIAGES (ATTENDANCE OF REGISTRARS) BILL.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked Mr. Attorney General, Whether, having regard to the numerous and strong objections raised against the Marriages (Attendance of Registrars) Bill by Nonconformist organizations and organs of opinion, he intends to press that measure?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight), in reply, said, Her Majesty's Government did intend to persevere with the Bill, and the amount of support that they had received from many quarters justified them in the belief that there were many of its provisions which were such as Nonconformists considered of great value. He was fully aware that objections from some quarters had been raised; and it was in order that those objections might be fairly discussed that he had himself put down a Notice of Motion, which had been upon the Paper for three weeks, to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. Her Majesty's Government hoped that those who had put down Blocking Notices to the Bill would not prevent this course being adopted.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION—REPORT ON THE CLERICAL ESTABLISHMENT.

MR. PULESTON (Devonport) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is proposed by the Royal Commission on the Civil Service to make a preliminary Report, embodying the views of the Commission on the clerical establishment; and, if so, whether it is now possible to give some indication of the time when such a Report may be expected?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I understand that it is not the intention of the Civil Establishments Commission to present a preliminary Report on the whole of the clerical establishments in the Civil Service. They propose, however, as I understand, to present a Report on the War Office and Admiralty, if possible, in the course of this summer.

BRITISH GUIANA AND VENEZUELA—THE BOUNDARIES QUESTION.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If the British Minister at Caracas has arrived in this country; and whether he is prepared to give the House any further information with regard to the boundary question between British Guiana and Venezuela, and the subsequent cessation of diplomatic relations; if the Government have appointed a Consul for the district of the Yuruari, now under the administration of Venezuela; and, if he has received any information as to the rumoured resignation of the President of Venezuela (General Guzman Blanco); and, if so, if he is aware of the reasons alleged to have caused that result?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): Information has been received at the Foreign Office this afternoon that Mr. St. John has arrived in this country; but he will not reach London for a day or two. I have not at present any further information to give the House as to the boundary question, or the suspension of relations by Venezuela. That act naturally interrupted the proposed appointment of a Consul for the district of the Yuruari. No information has reached Her Majesty's Government of the resignation by General Guzman Blanco of the Presidency of Venezuela.

NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES—SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTES.

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If he can inform the House of the nature of the *modus vivendi* submitted by the Dominion Government for the settlement of the Anglo-American Fisheries Disputes, and also the tenour of the reply of Her Majesty's Government; and, further, to inquire whether the Canadian proposals have been transmitted to the United States Government; and, if so, will he be good enough to state the nature of the despatch accompanying them?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): As I lately informed the House, I am about to lay upon the Table the despatch addressed by Her Majesty's Government to the Government of the United States, and containing proposals for the settlement of the differences in regard to the Canadian Fisheries. It will be accompanied by Papers fully explanatory. I do not think that it would be in any way advantageous to anticipate those Papers by a statement of their nature, which might lead to misapprehension. The proposals are made to the United States by Her Majesty's Government; but they are in harmony with the views of the Government of Canada.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS—HYDE PARK CORNER.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the First Commissioner of Works, If his attention has been called to the danger to pedestrians which the new improvements at Hyde Park Corner have brought about; whether it is a fact that two men have been run over opposite Constitution Hill in the course of last week; whether cabs are at present permitted to drive fast down the Hill; whether his attention has been called to the fact that the existing refuge is erected in a place where it is scarcely needed; and, whether he will get one or two supplementary refuges erected, and order that special directions be given to the policemen on duty to prevent fast driving?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University), in reply, said, that since he saw the hon. Member's Question on the Paper, he had communicated on the subject with the police authorities, and had been informed by them that they knew of only one such accident as was mentioned in the Question having occurred; that in that case a man was knocked down by a hackney carriage; that he was not seriously injured; and that he did not attach blame to anyone. The question of providing additional refuges for the new streets at Hyde Park Corner had been raised for the first time, so far as he knew, by the Question of the hon. Member; but he should, of course, carefully consider his suggestion.

DOMINION OF CANADA — MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether there is any truth in the statement that the Dominion Government of Canada have signified their intention of placing Mr. O'Brien under police surveillance, in the event of his visiting Canada for the purpose of calling attention to the evictions on the Marquess of Lansdowne's estates in Ireland?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): The Government have no knowledge of the circumstance stated in this Question.

DR. TANNER: I beg to give Notice that I shall repeat this Question on Thursday.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL ESTATES.

SIR SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Whether, owing to the very small return from the Northern Landed Estates of the Greenwich Hospital, he will consider the question of selling this property, which has greatly lessened in value, and is likely to become still further depreciated, and of investing the money in a more profitable manner for the benefit of the seamen of the Royal Navy?

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY) (Sheffield, Ecclesall): It has been the settled policy of the Admiralty for many years to dispose by sale of the landed estates of Greenwich Hospital, whenever there is a prospect of selling to advantage. The greater portion of the estates has already been sold, and it is intended to dispose of the remainder as opportunity offers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—PROMOTION IN THE OFFICE.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the following report is correct:—

> "The following promotions have been made in the Office of the Local Government Board:—Thomas Aiskew Mooney, M.A., LL.D. (University of Dublin), to be Secretary; D. J. Macshearan, B.A. (University of Dublin), to be Assistant Secretary; Robert J. Newel, Barrister-at-Law, to be Clerk of the First Class; and G. A. Mason, B.A., LL.D. (University of Dublin), to be Private Secretary to the Vice-President of the Board;"

and, whether the Government purpose giving preference and promotion in the Irish Office of the Local Government Board chiefly to Protestants and graduates of the University of Dublin?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The promotions in the Office of the Local Government Board are determined solely on the consideration of the fitness of the persons promoted for the post they are selected to fill, and the question of creed or their place of education have no bearing whatever on the appointments.

NAVY ESTIMATES—SPEECH OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSIC HALL, PADDINGTON,

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to a speech of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), delivered at the Metropolitan Music Hall last Saturday, in which he stated that so strong was the pressure he put upon the Admiralty that the Admiralty Estimates showed a total reduction of not less than £700,000; whether he has any objection to state in respect of what items or class of expenditure such reduction was made; and, whether such reduction was solely in consequence of the action of the noble Lord, or from any other cause?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): I have read with care the speech of my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington. In that speech my noble Friend pointed out the benefit which accrues to the National Exchequer if the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day insists upon the enforcement of economy, and urges upon his Colleagues a reduction of all superfluous or questionable expenditure; and he illustrated his argument by pointing out that the Navy Estimates of this year show a reduction of more than £700,000 compared with the expenditure of the preceding year. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to know the cause and reason of this, if he will do me the honour of reading the Statement which I laid on the Table of the House, together with the explanations accompanying the Vote, he will be in possession of all the reasons.

ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES—SPEECH OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSIC HALL, PADDINGTON.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, delivered at the Metropolitan Music Hall, in which he referred to certain reductions in the War and Admiralty Estimates; in respect of what items the reductions of £170,000 and £500,000 in the War Office Estimates were made; and, whether such reductions, or either of them, notwithstanding his objections thereto, were made in consequence of the action of the noble Lord, or from any other cause?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): In the speech of my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington, which, of course, we have all read, he refers to the two sums mentioned by the hon. Member. One of £500,000 was in respect of certain claims of the Egyptian Government for the cost of the Egyptian Army; and if the hon. Member had followed the debates on the subject this Session, he would have observed that a final settlement was recently arrived at with the Egyptian Government, one of the terms of which was that the contribution of £200,000 payable in 1886-7 for the cost of the English Army of Occupation was remitted. The necessary Votes were accordingly taken in the Supplementary Estimates of last year. As regards the sum of £170,000, it is the fact that the Estimates framed by my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury, then Secretary of State for War, and submitted to my noble Friend in December last, exceeded by about that sum the final Estimates framed by me at the end of February. Several Votes were altered in amount, according as the needs of the Public Service for the present year became more fully ascertained and settled. Our further experience enabled us to reckon on a lower price of provisions than could have been estimated in December; and we were fortunate enough to receive a windfall in the shape of increased appropriations in aid. So far as I am concerned, I shall cordially welcome the assistance of my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington, in or out of Office, in reducing any items of expenditure which can be shown to be unnecessary or excessive.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I would beg to ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War, in order to clear up that question of £500,000 stated in the Question, which is somewhat illusory as it appears on the Paper, Whether it is not the case that the £200,000 remitted to Egypt, to which he alludes, was included in the Supplementary Estimate of the War Office of £450,000 odd voted by Parliament, and presented to Parliament; and, whether the additional sum of £559,000, which had been claimed by the Egyptian Government, and which had been agreed to by the Treasury, the War Office, and the Foreign Office, before I left the Government, had not since been disagreed to by Her Majesty's Government; and, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not state on the 9th of March, in this House, that since he came into Office, the Egyptian claims had been reduced by more than £500,000?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) (who replied) said: This is a rather complicated Question. I think it will be better that I should reply to it in connection with a Question of a similar nature standing in the name of the hon. Member for Mid Lanark (Mr. Mason). I think I shall be able then to answer the Question of my noble Friend.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) inquired of the Secretary of State for War, Whether he meant that the reduction in the Estimates was due to the fuller ascertainment of the needs of the Public Services, and not to the action of the noble Lord?

[No reply.]

IRISH PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES—POLICE SURVEILLANCE.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is the intention of the Government, during the Easter Recess, to continue the practice of placing Irish Parliamentary Representatives, while visiting their constituencies, under police surveillance; and, whether it is his intention to order that a Constabulary embryonic stenographist shall attend every political meeting as heretofore?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): It is not the intention of the Government to give any special instructions either on the subject of police surveillance or reporting of the proceedings at public meetings.

Dr. TANNER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, as a rule, when Irish Members address their constituents they are under police surveillance?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I should be sorry to think that any such rule was necessary.

THE SLAVE TRADE (EAST AFRICA)—CAPTURE OF SLAVERS.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If the report is true that Her Majesty's ships the *Dolphin* and *Albatross* lately made an important capture of slaves and slave dhows near Suakin; whether it is a fact that 200 out of 300 slaves which had started from the interior perished on the land passage; whether the captured dhows were furnished with free papers from the Government; and, whether any real steps will be taken to repress the Slave Trade in the vicinity of Suakin?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The information referred to in the Question of the hon. Member appears to have been received by telegraph. No Report of this capture, or of the circumstances connected with it, has yet been received by the Foreign Office or Admiralty. Every effort is being made to repress the Slave Trade in the vicinity of Suakin, and along the coasts of the Red Sea; and if the capture mentioned in the Question has taken place, it would afford evidence that some success is attending these efforts.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE POSTMASTERSHIP AT BORRIS-IN-OSSORY, QUEEN'S COUNTY.

Mr. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's Co., Ossory) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the office of Postmaster at Borris-in-Ossory, Queen's County, is, or is likely to become, vacant; whether the situation is sought by a man named Tynan, who is more than 70 years of age, and would not be able to discharge the duties himself; whether it is true that a son of the said Tynan was sentenced in the Court at Green Street, Dublin, to nine months' imprisonment for stealing money from his master's till while in his employment as shop assistant; and, whether, under these circumstances, he will consider whether the post could be given to some more suitable candidate?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The Post Office at Borris-in-Ossory, is vacant, and will shortly be reported to the Treasury with whom the nomination will rest; I will, however, take care that a suitable person is appointed. No application from a man named Tynan has reached the Post Office.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—LOSS OF THE "KAPUNDA."

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether, in view of the result of the inquiry into the loss of the *Kapunda*, he purposes taking any steps by which negligent disregard of Sailing Regulations may be prevented for the future; whether it is a fact that the single women on board the *Kapunda* were locked in their berths on the night of the collision, and were consequently drowned without the possibility of escape; and, whether it is a custom on emigrant ships to lock single women in their berths during the night; and, if such be the case, whether he will consider what precautions of an alternative character may be taken, and direct accordingly?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In the case of the collision between the *Ada Melmore* and the *Kapunda*, the Board of Trade have already given instructions for the prosecution of the Master of the *Ada Melmore* for not carrying side-lights in accordance with the International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea. The single women on board the *Kapunda* were not locked in their berths. What was locked was the door of the compartment in which the single women were carried. This door is locked by the matron in charge of them, and can be unlocked and opened immediately in case of necessity. The Regulation requiring the matron to lock up the single women's quarters at night is a Regulation made by the Crown Agents for the Colonies. It has for many years been the practice to lock the door of the single women's compartment at night in the case of ships carrying emigrants to the British Colonies; and it is done for their own protection, and no complaints or objections have ever reached the Board of Trade.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) — SENTENCE ON R. COMERFORD AT BELFAST—CUMULATIVE SENTENCES.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the case of Robert Comerford, who was sentenced to 29 months' imprisonment, with hard labour, by the magistrates presiding at the Belfast Police Court, on 21st July last, for having assaulted five policemen who were at the time taking him a prisoner to the police barrack, and where this assault was dealt with as five separate offences, Whether it is the practice in England to pass cumulative sentences in such cases, or to treat the charges as constituting one offence only; and, whether Justices at Petty Sessions in England have power to sentence a prisoner, on conviction of any one offence, to a longer term than six months' imprisonment?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): By the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, magistrates are not allowed in England to impose on any person for several assaults committed on the same occasion cumulative sentences of imprisonment exceeding six months in the whole. Before that statute, I apprehend that each assault on a different person was a separate offence, for which, both by law and in practice, magistrates could award separate and cumulative sentences.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland, now that we are given to understand that it is impossible for a magistrate in England to give 29 months' sentence, whether he will take care that under the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill sentences shall not be cumulative?

[No reply.]

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. KELLY, CLERK OF PETTY SESSIONS AT TOOMEBRIDGE.

MR. PINKERTON (Galway) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Kelly, Clerk of Petty Sessions at Toomebridge, County Antrim, when appointed two years ago, gave an undertaking in writing that he would reside in the district before he was elected by the magistrates; whether the said Mr. Kelly has recently been appointed Clerk of Petty Sessions for the district of Mahera and Magherafelt, and whether he will now be able to fulfil his engagement; and, whether he is aware that serious public inconvenience will result from there being only one clerk in these three populous districts, the extremes of which are so far distant from each other, and situated in different counties?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): This Question appears on the Paper without Notice, and it cannot be answered without reference to Ireland for inquiry.

COASTGUARD AND LIFEBOAT STATIONS—TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION.

COLONEL LAURIE (Bath) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether the Government have under their consideration a scheme for placing the Coastguard and Lifeboat Stations of the United Kingdom in direct telegraphic communication, with a view to more prompt assistance to vessels in distress and the saving of life; and whether the lighthouses along and off the coast could be included in the scheme?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): A proposal for placing certain of the Coastguard Stations in closer telegraphic communication with the main Telegraph Stations has been receiving the attention of the Admiralty, and is now under consideration. The Admiralty have no jurisdiction over the lighthouses and vessels on the coast, or over the lifeboats and their arrangements.

SOUTH AFRICA—THE BECHUANA-LAND COMMISSION.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he has received any Memorial from Mankaroane, the Chief of the Batlapins, regarding the decisions of the Bechuana-Land Commission?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): A Memorial has been received. The Chief complains that the Land Commission declined to recognize certain land grants which had been made by him in favour of Europeans, including some of the best waters allotted to the tribe. The Memorial, which is dated June, 1886, is in the handwriting of a Mr. Donovan, who styles himself legal adviser and agent to Mankaroane, and who is the person chiefly interested in these grants. I do not consider that this is a matter affecting Mankaroane's personal interest; and I have replied that no sufficient reason has been shown for the reversing of the action of the Land Commission.

POST OFFICE CONTRACTS — BRANCH DAY MAIL FROM ABERDEEN TO KEITH.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Postmaster General, Whether it is the case that the Post Office Authorities recently agreed to pay £2,600 per annum for running a branch mail from Aberdeen to Keith, in connection with the down London Day Mail; and, if so, on what grounds they refuse to accelerate the Day Mail from Perth to Wick and Thurso, which carries a heavier mail, and serves a much larger population?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The train from Aberdeen to Keith was put on to secure two objects—the including of the night mails from Edinburgh and Glasgow in the first delivery of letters, and the establishing of a through post from Aberdeen to Inverness, so forming a connecting link with the far North. I have been unable to entertain the question of accelerating the Day Mail from Perth to Wick and Thurso, because the expense of serving the district is already so large in proportion to the revenue from the correspondence, that further outlay is not warranted. Every case of this kind must be dealt with on its merits; and, in any comparison, it is necessary to take into account all the circumstances.

EGYPT — SIR HENRY DRUMMOND WOLFF'S MISSION—NEUTRALIZATION OF EGYPT AND THE SUEZ CANAL.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he can give the House some information as to the present state of the negotiations with which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is charged; and, whether, having regard to the anticipations expressed some weeks ago by Her Majesty's Government as to the progress of those negotiations, he can fix a probable date for the termination of a Mission which has much exceeded the duration originally contemplated for it, and involves a very large annual expenditure?

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is correct that Her Majesty's Government have submitted proposals to the Sultan of Turkey and the European Powers, through the agency of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, for the neutralization of Egypt and the Suez Canal; if so, will he be good enough to inform the House the general tenour of the proposals, and what prospect there is, if any, of their being approved and ratified?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, E.): The discussion of the proposals made to the Sublime Porte by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, with a view to an ulterior Convention respecting Egypt, has continued in such a manner as to promise a favourable result; but it is impossible to give a probable date for the termination of his Mission, because unlooked-for difficulties might occur, and the speed at which the negotiations may progress does not depend on ourselves. The advantages which it is hoped to attain are so considerable that I believe that the House will not think the cost incommensurate. I have to add, with reference to the Question of the hon. Member for Sunderland as to the general tenour of the proposals, that it could neither conduce to their success, nor be in accordance with practice, to make a statement of their purport beyond what has been already stated on the part of Her Majesty's Government?

Mr. BRYCE: In consequence of the answer just given, I beg to give Notice that I shall refer to this question after Easter.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Has the cost of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission not approached something like £40,000 already?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: No, Sir; nothing like that sum.

ARMY (INDIA)—THE MEDICAL STAFF.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for War, What is the rank of officers belonging to the Medical Staff in India under six years service; do they receive such allowances as are allowed to officers of the rank of Captain or of the rank of Subaltern; are they the only officers with British troops in India who do not receive the allowances of their rank (officers holding brevet rank excepted); and, whether such officers, in consequence of the claims appertaining to relative rank not being observed, suffer a loss of £110 per annum?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham) (who replied) said: The rank of these officers is that of Surgeon. Their allowances are more than those of Subalterns, but less than those of Captains; after six years they are more than those of Captains. They do receive the allowances of their rank. There are no claims appertaining to relative rank, and no loss is suffered.

HARBOUR LOANS—SECURITY ON LOCAL RATES.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, In what manner it is intended to give increased facilities to localities to offer their local rates, by way of collateral security, to the Public Works Loan Commissioners for loans to carry out harbour works; and, whether the Government will consent to give effect to the recommendation of the Harbour Accommodation Committee, that a small Commission of Experts should be appointed to complete their labours?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, that legislation would be necessary in order to enable localities interested in harbour works to offer their local rates by way of collateral security to the Public Works Loan Commissioners. It was hoped that these legislative facilities would be provided by a clause in the Public Works Loan Bill. The Government were unable to assent to the appointment of a small Commission of experts, as proposed by the Harbour Accommodation Committee. He begged to refer the right hon. Member to answers given to similar Questions on the 30th of March and 23rd of July, 1885.

TENANT FARMERS (WALES).

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government is prepared to afford to the tenant farmers of Wales facilities to buy their holdings by means of Government loans, on terms similar to those which the Government makes to landlords to redeem the tithe rent-charge upon the land?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): No, Sir; no representations have yet been made to Her Majesty's Government, by either owners or occupiers, which would lead them to believe that any special facilities are desired, or are necessary, to enable the owner to sell, or the tenant to buy, his holding in Wales, and they are not, therefore, prepared to sanction any exceptional land legislation for Wales.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—THE WHITEBOY ACTS AND LATER STATUTES.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in addition to the reprinting of the Whiteboy Acts, he will cause the following Acts of Parliament mentioned in the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill to be reprinted and distributed—namely, Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881; Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1886; Juries Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1876; Petty Sessions (Ireland) Act, 1851; and such portion of the 6 & 7 *Will.* IV., c. 13, as relates to the appointment of Resident Magistrates?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): My right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour) undertook to lay on the Table a summary of the provisions of the Whiteboy

Acts so far as they related to the Bill before the House, and that summary is in preparation. The Acts quoted by the hon. Member are all on the Table of the House, and can be found without difficulty; and it would be unusual and expensive to reprint all the Acts mentioned in the Bill before the House.

MR. J. E. ELLIS asked the right hon. Gentleman to reprint the Act of *Will.* IV. with respect to Resident Magistrates. It would not involve much expense.

MR. W. H. SMITH: I think, Sir, the House is familiar with its provisions.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman had any objection to including in the reprint a list of the Acts which amended or altered in any way the Whiteboy Acts?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.) said, he should be glad to put that list down.

MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked, whether all the Acts relating to the Whiteboy Acts, so far as they referred to the new Criminal Amendment Law, would be placed on the Table of the House?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR thought it would probably be more convenient that a summary should be placed on the Table. ["No, no."] It was merely a question of public expense; and if the House preferred that they should be given it should be done.

CRIME (ENGLAND AND WALES)—BOYCOTTING AND INTIMIDATION IN ENGLAND.

MR. NEWNES (Cambridge, E., Newmarket) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government intend to take any steps to prevent Boycotting and intimidation in England.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am not aware that either Boycotting or intimidation exists in England; and, therefore, it is unnecessary to take any steps in the matter.

MR. NEWNES said, that, in consequence of the answer just given by the First Lord of the Treasury, he would, on an early day, call attention to the prevalence of Boycotting and intimidation in England, and move a Resolution.

POST OFFICE—FREE POSTAGE TO THE SOUTH KENSINGTON EXHIBITION.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, To what extent, and to what persons, the Treasury has allowed free postage in connection with any of the South Kensington Exhibitions held otherwise than under Royal Commission; and, who is responsible for granting such allowance?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Free inland postage was allowed on the official correspondence of the Commissioners for the International Fisheries and Health Exhibitions in 1883 and 1884. In each case an individual officer of the Commission was deputed to certify the official character of the correspondence, free postage being limited to letters bearing the official stamp. Through a misunderstanding as to the precedents of the Paris Exhibition of 1878 and previous Commissions, the account opened by the Post Office with the Fisheries and Health Exhibitions was regarded as a non-paying account. In 1884 the late Mr. Fawcett called special attention to this matter, with a view of preventing further concessions of a like character. The Post Office was responsible in 1883 and 1884 for the course taken as to the Fisheries and Health Exhibitions.

MR. BRADLAUGH asked, whether free postage had been granted to persons connected with the Imperial Institute?

MR. W. H. SMITH: No; it has not.

DEFENCE OF THE EGYPTIAN FRONTIER. — UNAUTHORIZED EXPENDITURE.

MR. MASON (Lanark, Mid) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the following statement made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), in an address to his constituents on Saturday:—

> "I had to deal with an estimate which was presented by the War Office, amounting to over half a million of money for expenditure incurred in connection with the defence of the Egyptian Frontier. That expenditure had been incurred without the knowledge of the War Office, without the knowledge of the Treasury, without the sanction of Parliament,

> and I utterly declined to have anything whatever to do with it, or to admit it in any way. . . . . Well, in comes my successor, who, the moment this estimate was presented to him, took just the same view as I did, exactly. . . . . Consequently, the Government have never presented that Estimate to the House of Commons ;"

whether the Government have repudiated their liability to pay this Estimate; whether they have called upon the Egyptian Government to pay the money; and, whether it has been paid; and, if so, by whom?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): A preliminary Estimate or statement of claim made by the Egyptian Government for upwards of £500,000 had been under the consideration of the Treasury and the War Office for expenditure incurred in connection with the defence of the Egyptian Frontier. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill) objected strongly to admitting any liability on the part of this country for such expenditure; and I may say for myself, as Secretary of State for War, that I never admitted that liability, but finally, as my noble Friend has stated, he gave way on the point; but I may remark that the Report of General Stephenson on these claims only left Cairo on December 22. When the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) came into Office, the Government once more carefully considered the matter, and came to the conclusion that there was only a portion of this expenditure which had been incurred with the authority of the Representatives of England in Egypt, and for which this country could fairly be held liable. In respect of that portion, the Egyptian Government has been reimbursed by the remission of the Capitation Grant of £200,000, payable by Egypt to England, for the year 1886-7, and Votes for this amount have, as the hon. Member will recollect, been recently agreed to by this House. For the remainder of the £500,000 the English Government has declined any liability, with the exception of the Vote for the garrison at Suakin. In answer to the latter part of the hon. Member's Question, I may say that the English Government has not called upon the Egyptian Government to pay this sum, as the money had already been paid out of the funds at the disposal of the Egyptian Government. With regard to the Question of my noble Friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have to say that the reduction in the Supplementary Estimates did amount to £500,000, as he stated. Of that amount some £200,000 was due to the reduction in the amount of the deficiency estimated in December on ordinary War Department Votes for the year, which it was found could be effected in the interval between December and March.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Where is this English Government that the right hon. Gentleman has spoken of?

MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not aware of the object of the hon. Member's Question. The English Government is in England, and the Egyptian Government is in Egypt.

DR. CLARK: It is the British Government, and not the English Government.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman state whether any of the reductions were due to causes independent of those which led to the retirement of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington?

[No reply.]

PARLIAMENT — SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE—THE EASTER RECESS.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, in regard to Easter, and in consideration of the serious inconvenience caused to hon. Members as to uncertainty and the shortness of the Recess, especially such as represent constituencies in distant parts, If the Government will reconsider their resolution to defer the adjournment of the House until so late a date as Thursday; and, if so, to what date it is proposed that the House shall stand adjourned? The hon. Member further asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman would consent not to take the Division on the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill till Monday, the 18th, as he thought it would be for the convenience of many hon. Members if he could give that assurance?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Sir, it is my wish, on the part of the Government, to make such arrangements with regard to the Sittings of the House as may be most convenient to all sections of the House; but we have our own sense of the duty that is incumbent upon us; and I am unable, therefore, to give the hon. Gentleman any hope that the Government will be able to reconsider the decision which they have already announced to the House. But I understand that it would be for the convenience of the House that a Morning Sitting should be held on Thursday, and that the House should adjourn in sufficient time for hon. Gentlemen to catch the afternoon and evening trains. If that is the wish, and an understanding can be arrived at, I shall be exceedingly glad to offer every facility, so far as the Government are concerned, for that purpose. The hon. Gentleman will understand that it is necessary an understanding should be arrived at in order to carry out the arrangement. As to the date of the Division, I should desire to consult the convenience of all sections of the House on that subject; but I must remark that the date which the hon. Member named is a very late date, having regard to the very serious amount of work that is before us during the present Session, and the small amount of work that we have yet been able to accomplish.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he could not promise not to take any other Business except the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill in the Easter week?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot undertake to do that. The Government think it is their duty to proceed *de die in diem* with the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill as the first Business of the House until the second reading is obtained; but there may be matters of subsidiary or comparatively small importance that might be taken after the discussion of that Bill with advantage to the country.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the right hon. Gentleman, whether he would, as usual, move the adjournment of the House over Good Friday at the commencement of Public Business on Thursday?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: The usual course will be followed.

COMMITTEE ON NAVY ESTIMATES—THE ORDER OF REFERENCE.

Admiral FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, he will consent to the Order of Reference to the Committee on Navy Estimates being so framed as to invite an expression of opinion by the said Committee, after evidence had and obtained, as to the sufficiency or otherwise of our existing Naval Force for the requirements of the Empire, in view of a possible combination of Naval Powers against this country in any future war, seeing that much uneasiness prevails in the country upon the subject, and that the opinion of the most competent naval authorities is in direct conflict with official statements on this most important question?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): My hon. and gallant Friend proposes to include in a Reference to a Commission questions of policy which belong entirely to the Government of the day, and for which they must always be responsible. I am unable to consent to any such course. The Government must continue to be held solely responsible for asking from Parliament such provision as they may deem necessary for the security of the country.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL—LEASEHOLDERS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland, Whether he can say anything to allay the alarm and apprehension created amongst many perpetuity and other leaseholders in Ireland by the appearance of the coming measure? Is it intended to make leaseholders who have not paid a fine compulsorily present tenants, and thereby subject them to all the provisions which enable the landlord to apply to resume the holding; and is it intended to apply to leaseholders who do not desire to become present tenants?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Holmes) (Dublin University): If the hon. and learned Member reads the 1st clause of the Bill he will see that it does not apply to perpetuity leaseholders.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman answer the Question? Is it intended to make leaseholders present tenants in any case against their will, except in cases where they have paid fines for their leases; and is it intended that the landlord shall have power to apply to resume the holdings?

MR. HOLMES: The Question is a very complicated one, and I must ask that it shall be placed on the Paper.

WAYS AND MEANS—THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I should like to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he can inform the House when the Budget is likely to be introduced? Perhaps I may be allowed to add that very great inconvenience is being caused in all commercial quarters owing to the delay in this matter.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I greatly regret the delay which has arisen in the production of the Budget. We are extremely anxious that it should be introduced, and I think I have already stated that as soon as we have obtained the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, my right hon. Friend will explain the Budget.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE, 1887.

HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS.

THE COMPTROLLER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Lord ARTHUR HILL) *reported* Her Majesty's Answer to the humble Address of the 24th day of March last, as followeth:—

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I have received your Address praying that the 91st Article of the Education Code, 1887, be amended.

The matter on which you have expressed a wish is one of grave importance, upon which the Royal Commission now sitting is engaged in collecting Evidence, especially with reference to the principle hitherto applied by the Education Department to cases of this kind.

When that Commission have made their Report, the suggestion contained in your Address will be carefully considered, together with the Report; and, if My Committee of Council on Education should be of opinion that any alterations in the Education Code can be made by which they will be better adapted to meet the Educational requirements of My People, such alterations shall be duly laid before you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING. [FIRST NIGHT.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury), in rising to move the following Amendment:—

> "That this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"

said, he had seldom hitherto, when great Imperial questions were brought before the House, deemed it to be his duty to take part in the debate, but had been content to give his vote in accordance with what he believed to be the interest of the country. But his experience had convinced him that in some of the votes which he had given in support of exceptional laws for Ireland he had been misled; and it was for this reason that he thought it was his duty not to give simply a silent vote on the present occasion. The Bill before the House would deprive Ireland of one of the Constitutional guarantees which prevailed in every other part of this Empire, of which we were proud, and which other civilized nations had been glad to copy from us. To deal with Ireland by these exceptional measures had been a mistake, and it was time we should adopt another and better course. The Government called upon them now to pass this Bill, for which no case had been made out, and with regard to which very imperfect information had been forthcoming. He thought he was accurate in stating that the Bill rested on two speeches—one by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant and the other by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The anecdotes, to repeat the phrase of the former right hon. Gentleman, had been shown by hon. Gentlemen from Ireland to be, in many instances, altogether unfounded. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had assumed that the facts in support of the Bill were matters of common knowledge. This was the situation, and on this ground they were asked to apply this Bill to Ireland. Only one serious case of Boycotting had been quoted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and this was given as a specimen of what was occurring in Ireland. He thought he might say in passing, and in reference to an answer given by the First Lord of the Treasury, that they, the English Members, also knew something of Boycotting. The First Lord of the Treasury had stated with perfect confidence that there was no Boycotting or intimidation in England. He did not hesitate to say that in the county he represented he could state cases of Boycotting, and Boycotting as atrocious as any of those brought before the House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as reasons for passing this Bill. With regard to intimidation, hon. Members around him could also say something about intimidation. The poor agricultural labourers in the counties during the severe winter had reason to know that intimidation prevailed in England as well as in Ireland. As to the cases brought forward by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, probably they would hear something more about them before the debate terminated; but he should like to say that he had official information which did not agree with the information supplied by the Chief Secretary. He would read one or two extracts only, which gave a different account altogether as to the state of Ireland. Those extracts were from an authority which would be recognized by the Party opposite. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), speaking not so long ago, said that he—

> "Saw nothing unsatisfactory—nothing specially alarming—in the state of Ireland. There was a great deal of popular excitement, a good deal of disorder and violent speaking; but in spite of all prophecies Ireland was at that moment practically free from crime."

They were told that "crime had been reduced;" that it was "in a normal condition, and below its normal condition." Then they were informed by the noble Lord that there was a certain school of political equitation specially represented by *The Times*, which persisted in adopting a line with regard to Ireland which consisted in continually jobbing it in the mouth, hitting it over the head with the whip, digging it in the side with the spurs—a method, said the noble Lord, which had laid rider after rider in the ditch. That was his description of the state of Ireland, and of the proposal to cure it by coercion, in the debate on the Address at the end of January. He was bound to say that the noble Lord had recently given them a somewhat different account; but where had his later official knowledge been obtained? It could not have been acquired since he left Office, and therefore it must have been obtained before that event. But the memory of the noble Lord was proverbially treacherous, and he (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) preferred to take the noble Lord's statements of official information in January to his recollections of that official information in April. The noble Lord now told them the Bill must be passed in its entirety. There were rumours that certain clauses in the Bill were to be abandoned; but the noble Lord said—"Unless you pass the Bill in its entirety you will have done nothing;" and he added—

> "I say, from what I know, that within a month or two of passing this Bill, once more peace and order will reign, and true liberty will prevail in Ireland."

The peace and order that would be brought about by this Bill would be such as prevailed when the historic announcement was made that "order reigns in Warsaw." This was the first time during the 87 years of the Union that it had been proposed that trial by jury should be not suspended, but permanently abrogated, in Ireland. It was the first time during the 700 years, since the conquest of Ireland, that it had been proposed that Irishmen accused of offences in their own country should be brought to this country to be tried—to a country which Irish peasants regarded as being to all intents a foreign country. A corresponding state of things in other countries had not produced a similar proposal. In Sicily it had been equally impossible, owing to the prejudices of the population to obtain verdicts; but he had not heard that Sicilians were removed to Naples, Rome, or Milan to be tried; and yet the differences of race were far less than they are between the people of Ireland and the people of England. There was no definition of the legal qualification to be required of one of the two Resident Magistrates before whom certain cases were to be tried. The Government took credit for not having made the Bill applicable to political offences; but was it possible to draw the line? And if it were possible he believed that the day was not far distant when political offences would have to be avowedly dealt with in the same manner as the present Bill dealt with the offences to which it was supposed to be limited. He felt convinced that the Government could not stop at the proposed limit. They would be compelled to apply the same rule to political offences, and then trial by jury in Ireland, or, at least, by Irish juries, would be entirely abrogated. It was his firm conviction that the disease was too deeply seated to be cured by measures like this, and the remedy must be sought elsewhere. We had passed many measures that were intended for the benefit of Ireland; but we had not passed that for which the people of Ireland had persistently asked, and that was a measure to give them self-government. And how had we governed Ireland, even when exceptional measures were not in operation? Our ordinary government of Ireland had been well described by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who said it was a system founded on the bayonets of 30,000 men encamped permanently in a hostile country; that it resembled Russia's government of Poland and the government of Venice under Austrian rule; that Irish officials were appointed by a foreign Government without a shadow of representative authority. He went on to say that the time had come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism known as Dublin Castle; that that was the work to which the new Parliament should be called; and that by doing that work it would best promote the true interests of the United Kingdom. The right hon. Gentleman further said in the same speech that the alternative was to "renew the dreary experiment of repressive legislation," and asked—

> "Is it not discreditable that it is only by un-Constitutional means we are able to secure peace and order in one portion of Her Majesty's Dominions?"

It was to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman had not set his hand to the work which he himself said was the work that the new Parliament ought to perform. Instead of doing that, he was content once more to "renew the dreary experiment of repressive legislation." Until another and a better way was adopted, we should have no peace or order in Ireland. The inevitable effect of the passing of the Bill on the influence of the Nationalist Leaders would be to diminish that influence for good and to increase it for evil. He could only hope that the leaders and the people would put restraint on themselves. If he were an Irishman, he did not know whether, even at his age, he should be able to put upon himself the restraint he was hoping for from others, and he could only pray that his fears might not be realized. In any case, it was clear that the mere passing of the Bill would render more difficult the future task of bringing about harmony between the peoples of the two countries. He was aware that any resistance which he and those who thought with him might offer to this ill-fated Bill could, in the present state of Parties, have but little effect; but, notwithstanding this, he felt it his duty to protest against its passing; and he, therefore, moved the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said that, taking as he did precisely the same view of the probable effect of the Coercion Bill on Ireland as his hon. Friend who had just sat down (Sir Bernhard Samuelson), he had much pleasure in seconding the Amendment against the second reading. The Government had incurred a grave and serious responsibility in endeavouring to rule Ireland by a special Criminal Law, rather than in accordance with the wishes of the majority of its people. He would admit that those who opposed the Bill also took upon themselves a grave responsibility, as every word spoken against the Bill in the House would weaken its operation if it were really necessary. But he believed the Government was adopting the wrong course to prevent the increase of disloyalty in Ireland, and they were adopting a course that could end only in increased disaster, disunion, and disloyalty. The plan of coercion for the government of Ireland had been tried 86 times since the Act of Union, little more than three-quarters of a century ago, and each time it had failed. The difficulty of governing Ireland was increased by every attempt we made to govern it by force, and in his belief it was doomed to a further failure when this Bill was passed. In his political life he had seen five or six Governments shipwrecked on the question of ruling Ireland, and signs were not wanting of another impending shipwreck upon the same rock. The controversy ought to be brought to a close; but he did not believe it could be brought to an end by force of arms. He believed that the true remedy and the only remedy was moral suasion, and that could only be effective by governing the people according to the will of the majority. There had been too many accusations of inconsistency hurled across the floor of the House, and, what was more painful still, too many between sections of the Opposition. It was very painful to him to see the two great Parties in the State in such thorough disagreement on this question, and still more painful to see those whom he was in the habit of looking upon as the Leaders of the Liberal Party disagreeing among themselves on the subject. There must be an end to these *tu quoque* arguments. Bidding for the Irish vote might be not only detrimental to the interests of Party, but even dangerous to the interests of our common country and of Ireland. It gave the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) the opportunity of playing upon both Parties, and he believed the hon. Member had played upon both Parties in a manner which was highly dangerous. He believed the question could only be solved by dealing with Ireland as they ought to deal with a people of intelligence and capacity who were capable of organizing and governing their own country for the advantage of their own people. This Bill brought in by the Government was both so bitter and fierce in its character that he could hardly find words to describe it, and it contained provisions which were proposed for the first time in the history of Irish coercive legislation. With reference to the examination of witnesses under the Bill, he could imagine nothing more detrimental to the interests of law and justice than that, on the *fiat* of the Attorney General, a Resident Magistrate might be directed to examine persons on oath; that the witness should not be excused from answering, on the ground that he might incriminate himself, and that he should be liable to indictment for perjury if he told a lie. This power was not to be confined to one district, but was to apply to the whole of Ireland. The powers to be given to the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim particular districts, and to suppress, after Proclamation, any association or meeting which he "believed" to be dangerous, were other features of the Bill which he condemned; while another objectionable part of the measure was the peremptory power which it gave of the search for arms in a proclaimed district. This Bill further differed, he believed, from all previous Coercion Acts by the insertion of provisions relating to the crimes created with the Whiteboy Acts, although the penalties under those Acts were not revision; and of all the Acts that had been inflicted upon the people of Ireland he had ever had the opportunity of reading, the Whiteboy Acts were the most bloody in their operation. They were repealed in 1831, and were to be revived in 1887. Under them the offence of sending a threatening letter was punishable by death, and in every respect the Acts were most tyrannical and severe. They were, in short, the memory of a hateful system of legislation which had been brought to bear on the country. In those circumstances, he was prepared to take his stand on the logical position laid down a short time since in that House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who described that position as declining to add to the stringency of the Criminal Law in Ireland until all other remedies have failed. He was unable, therefore, to vote for a Bill of the kind until he was fully assured, in his own mind, that all other methods of dealing honestly and justly with Ireland had failed, and had had no effect whatever. During the whole time he (Sir Joseph Pease) had been in the House, he was never more disappointed and dissatisfied with a case than with that which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland endeavoured to make out as to the necessity for the Bill. The case he made out was glaringly insufficient; and if, as he stated, there was urgent necessity for it, he thought the right hon. Gentleman would have been fortified by the production of proof of a serious increase of crime; but he showed nothing of the kind, and gave the House very few statistics. In fact, there had been a decrease of crime. He had read many of the charges of the Judges; but those charges were based on documents which he had never seen and which the House had never seen. The right hon. Gentleman told the House that there were 836 persons then Boycotted; but, from all that he (Sir Joseph Pease) had read in *The Times*, he should have thought the number would have been as many thousands. The Chief Secretary then said there were some 917 persons under police protection, and that 770 policemen were engaged in that duty; but there was no doubt that a large number of those men were engaged in watching and looking after farms from which the tenants had been evicted. Let them look at some Returns of agrarian outrages which the Chief Secretary had not touched. In the last six months of 1885 there were 543 cases, of which 232 were threatening letters, and four were murders; in the last six months of 1886 the number of cases was 472, of which 179 were threatening letters, and three were murders; and in the last quarter of 1866 there had been a further decrease of offences against life. Next they were told that juries would not convict—that there was Boycotting, terror of the Land League, the presence of American money, and great danger of evil counsels from the United States. He would admit that, as they stated, juries would not convict, and that there was Boycotting in Ireland; but he contended that if there was that difficulty now in procuring evidence and getting juries to convict, the sure way to increase that difficulty, and to increase the amount of the American subscription, was to pass that Bill. The Land Question was the evil at the bottom of the whole Irish Question, and unless they rooted out the complaint—until the Land Laws were fairly, justly, and generously dealt with—the disease would only break out afresh. If the evil was not redressed, this Bill would produce secret societies in lieu of open meetings, and there would be an increase of offences. Some hon. Gentlemen would say that the Land Act of 1881 had been a failure; but five years' record of its working, ending August 21, 1886, showed that 169,651 cases were brought before the Land Commission to be dealt with. Those cases represented 4,672,084 acres—nearly one-third of the whole of the land of Ireland under cultivation; and why were those cases taken to the Courts? Simply because the rent claimed by the landlord was higher than the tenant could pay, or ought to pay. This was proved by the fact that the Courts had reduced rents to the extent of about £560,000, which had consequently been taken from the pockets of the landlords. Capitalized, in 15 years that would amount to over £8,000,000, and, under those circumstances, it was not necessary to ask how the tenants of Ireland had been treated by the landlords. The Sub-Commissioners reduced rents after the passing of the Act of 1881 by about 20 per cent; the Civil Bill Court reduced them by 20 per cent, and the agreements were cut down to 16½ per cent. But recently the rents had been cut down to 32 per cent, and if this rate of reduction had been applied two or three years ago, instead of a reduction of £500,000 there would have been £900,000 or £1,000,000 taken yearly from the rents of the landlords, and that would have made a great difference to the poor people of Ireland. Land that went into the Land Courts valued at 13*s.* 5*d.* per acre left them with the rent fixed at 9*s.* 4*d.* per acre, and this was a most important reduction to the small tenants, including those who held 26 acres and under. After the changes that the Land Law had passed through in Ireland the House would be surprised to hear it stated that the Poor Law valuation in Ireland was still in excess of the judicial rents. Judicial rents had been fixed to the amount of £2,586,000, and the Poor Law valuation of those judicial rents showed an excess of £530,000. Had the House any idea of the amount of money that the poor Irish people had lost between the years 1881 and 1886 in consequence of the depreciation of agricultural produce? They had lost no less than £24,000,000. That was a serious loss; but added to it must be the amount of excessive rents which the poor people had to pay to their landlords. When he bore that in mind, and remembered that the tenants who had suffered so seriously had, in addition, been subjected to the exactions of rapacious landlords, he could not feel surprised at the existence of the Land League, or even at the existence of secret societies. If the Government desired to have done with the League, let them not rely on alterations of the law, no matter how drastic; let them rather act on the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller, who declared that rents were too high. Yet, notwithstanding this evidence of a gallant officer, who was noted for his common sense as much as for his skill as a soldier, the Government affected to be surprised to find that the National League existed. Sir Redvers Buller distinctly stated that he was of opinion that the rents were too high, and that the poor tenants were now paying as much rent as they could afford. It should be remembered that where the rents had been reduced to about 20 per cent in Ireland, far greater reductions had been made upon English estates—larger reductions than had been effected in Ireland by the Land Courts—by the landlords of those estates; and he believed that in cases where the rents in Ireland had recently been reduced 30 per cent, rents had been reduced to a far greater extent—he should say, many including the landlord's outlay in draining, building, and improvements, 60 per cent—in England. Indeed, he believed he could lay his hand upon estate after estate where the reductions of rent had not been less than 60 per cent. He happened to hear of a district in Norfolk the other day where 40 country houses had become unoccupied and unused, an evidence of the general falling-off in the value of agricultural produce. He looked with the greatest dismay upon the step which Her Majesty's Government was now taking, and he warned right hon. Members opposite that to try once more to govern Ireland by coercion was to attempt a Herculean task, which had broken down some strong Governments, and would do so again. Nearly every Chief Secretary on whom such a task had been imposed in recent years had had cause to regret his assumption of Office. If ever a man went to Ireland with the intention of doing his very best for the people of that country—and he (Sir Joseph Pease) could prove it from the private letters which he had in his possession—that man was the late Mr. Forster. He went to Ireland solely and entirely with the desire of doing his best for that country; but he had lost his health, and his spirit failed him under the load which he had undertaken, and now he was no longer with them. Then there was the case of his friend Sir George Trevelyan, and the few years he spent at the Irish Office doubled, even quadrupled, the years of his life in the effect that they had upon him. He was succeeded by his right hon. friend the Member for Stirlingshire (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), who was the only exception to the rule, and who reminded him of the shield of Rhoderick Dhu—

"Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;"

and who, like the Chieftain's antagonist—

"Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But, breathless all, Fitz-James arose"—

did not find the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland an agreeable position. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) now undertook the duty of that Office with a grave face and a serious air, and no doubt he believed that he would succeed in going through with his Coercion Act, notwithstanding the failures of his Predecessors. He (Sir Joseph Pease) hoped, though he doubted, that the right hon. Gentleman possessed the same toughness which had characterized the right hon. Member for Stirlingshire. [*A laugh.*] That was no jesting matter, for every man who had attempted to govern Ireland by coercion found the same experience—his face became more serious, and his hair more grey. Among the Noblemen who had filled the position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, several were of opinion that there was a better way to govern the country than by coercion. Lord Spencer, who had been Viceroy of Ireland for 8½ years, his two periods of Office being taken together, at last confessed that that country must be ruled by another way than coercion. Lord Carnarvon, himself, had also recommended in "another place" that the Irish people should be governed more in accordance with their sentiment; and the recommendation of the Government's own Royal Commission, presided over by Lord Cowper, prescribed other remedies than coercion. The principles which ought to direct us in the present controversy were, in his opinion, those laid down in the following passage from Dymond's *Principles of Morality*, which was a favourite author of his right hon. Friend the Member for Central Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) as being the duties of a Government in regard to a country like Ireland—

> "Wherever men are competent to look the first duties of humanity in the face, and to provide for their defence against the invasion of hunger and the inclemencies of the sky, there they will, out of all doubt, be found equally capable of every other exertion that may be necessary to their security and welfare. Present to them a Constitution which shall put them into a simple and intelligible method of directing their own affairs, adjudging their contests among themselves, and cherishing in their bosoms a manly sense of dignity, equality, and independence, and we need not doubt that prosperity and virtue will be the result."

The reason of the discontent of the Irish people was that they were poor and starving, and out of sympathy with their Land Laws, which had been, and were still, unjust. He believed that this Bill would create more alienation and cause more crime. He would, therefore, appeal to the right hon. Gentleman opposite and the Government to abandon those things which were not remedies, such as the bayonet of the soldier, the truncheon of the policeman, and the terrors of the gaol at Kilmainham, and to try, by legislation more in accordance with the wishes of the Irish people, but in accordance also with Imperial necessities, to soothe the irritation of centuries, and promote the real Union of the Empire.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The hon. Baronet who has just sat down has told us a good deal about the pain that he has felt in the course of these discussions. I can quite understand, though I cannot with accuracy say that I sympathize very greatly with him. When the hon. Baronet remembers the course which he and others took upon a measure of this nature, and in circumstances not very dissimilar from those by which we are surrounded now, I can well believe that his position, and that of his Friends, is painful in the extreme. The hon. Baronet, however, cordially agrees with the Amendment. Now, what is the nature of that Amendment? The hon. Member for Banbury (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) asks the House to decline to proceed with the Bill which is now before it, because it will tend to increase disorder in Ireland and endanger the Union. But what is the alternative which the hon. Member offers us? The evil, he says, is far too deeply seated to be dealt with by the measure which is now before us; and the hon. Baronet, following that observation, declares that if you want to increase it to an unlimited extent, all you have to do is to pass this Bill. The people of Ireland, he says, are poor and starving; and that poverty and starvation exist because they live under Land Laws which have been and are unjust, and that notwithstanding the laws of which he complains were passed by the right hon. Gentleman who sits below him. The hon. Member for Banbury says that the only remedy for the present state of things is that we should make up our minds to concede Home Rule. Well, Sir, I am prepared to admit that this is one of the alternatives which we have before us. We have the policy of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) on the one hand, the policy of the Government on the other. The policy of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian we have always regarded, whether rightly or wrongly, in its ultimate issue, as a policy for the repeal of the Union. The policy of Lord Salisbury and his Colleagues, on the other hand, we regard, whether rightly or wrongly, as the policy of maintaining the Union. Sir, it was shown, I think conclusively, by the experience of the year 1881, that remedial legislation by itself was absolutely useless then, and would be useless now; and unless we mean to do absolutely nothing, and are content to leave Ireland in its present state of chaos, it is between these two alternatives, for all practical purposes, that Parliament must decide, if it means to deal in earnest with the present situation. We cannot allow Ireland to remain in its present state of chaos and confusion; that is absolutely certain. The hon. Member for Banbury knows, or ought to know, that we are absolutely precluded by the mandate of the country, as well as by our own convictions, from entertaining the policy of the right hon. Gentleman—namely, the concession of Home Rule, and the establishment of a Parliament in Dublin; and, therefore, the only alternative which is left to us is the policy of the Government. That being so, if we are able successfully to meet and dispose of the objections which have been raised to this measure, it seems to me that Parliament would do well to pass it into law, and to pass it into law without delay. Now, what are the main objections to this measure? I do not wish to pledge myself to all or any of its details to-night; but, generally speaking, the chief of them appear to be three in number. The first is that the grounds upon which it is asked for are absolutely insufficient and altogether unsatisfactory. The second is that there is a fundamental distinction between the circumstances of 1881, under which the right hon. Gentleman resorted to coercion, and the circumstances of to-day, under which my right hon. Friend proposes to follow his example. Thirdly, we are told, and the hon. Member for Banbury told us just now, that coercion had never been successful in the past, and that it is, therefore, absolutely certain to fail again in future. Now, Sir, I wish to examine each of these objections. The first objection was made, if I remember rightly, by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. He laid great stress upon it, and I heard him with profound surprise, and I can only account for it by the fact that the right hon. Gentleman's memory must have entirely failed him. I should have thought that the charges of the Judges quoted by the Chief Secretary would have some weight with the right hon. Gentleman. When his Government in 1881 was engaged in introducing a measure of this nature the charges of the Judges were made use of and freely quoted in support of the measure introduced by the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). One of those charges is almost identical in its terms with the charge referred to by my right hon. Friend. The House will remember that my right hon. Friend quoted from the charge of Mr. Justice Lawson. [*Laughter and derisive cheers from Home Rule Members.*] I hope hon. Members will allow me to make my own speech in my own way. Speaking at the Mayo Assizes in March, 1887, Mr. Justice Lawson used these words—

> "The present state of things, according to the reports made to him, approached as near to rebellion against the authority of the country as anything short of civil war could be."

That was in 1887. What do I find in 1881? In 1881 I find the right hon. Member for Derby quoted the charge of Judge Fitzgerald made at the Munster Winter Assizes, 1880, in which occurs this passage—

> "Some organization, acting on the cupidity, the passions, and the fears of the people, had reduced some districts in the country into anarchy and confusion, little, if at all, differing from civil war."

Now the charge of Mr. Justice Fitzgerald in 1881 differs in no respect that I am aware of from the charge quoted by my right hon. Friend in 1887. But in 1881 the charges of the Judges constituted, in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, a grave and formidable point in the indictment of the right hon. Member for Derby. But now, when precisely similar charges are produced by the Chief Secretary, what is the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman? No attention is to be paid to them; they are made light of and discredited and cast aside altogether. That is a specimen—the first specimen I wish to give—of the fairness and impartiality of the right hon. Gentleman in relation to this question. Well, Sir, I should have thought that the evidence adduced by my right hon. Friend with regard to the prevalence of the cruel system of Boycotting might possibly appeal to the right hon. Gentleman. We have heard something to-night about Boycotting and intimidation in England. It it be true that Boycotting and intimidation exist in any part of this country in anything approaching the degree to which they exist in Ireland, I should be the first person to advocate for England precisely similar legislation to this. "Boycotting," says the right hon. Gentleman; "you have had more Boycotting in Ireland than you have to-day. Boycotting is exclusive dealing; and, moreover, there is this remarkable feature about the Boycotting of the present time—namely, that it is almost entirely separated from outrage and from crime." Why, I say that Boycotting is a crime, and a dastardly outrage in itself. Has the right hon. Gentleman, of all men in the world, actually forgotten what Boycotting really means? If he has I must refresh his memory a little. Now I do not wish to exaggerate in any description I shall give of Boycotting, and therefore I will only give a very moderate and temperate definition—a description given by a man possessed of a large knowledge and a wide experience of Ireland and Irish affairs and a full access to all sources of official information—

> "Boycotting is combined intimidation made use of for the purpose of destroying the private liberties of choice by fear of ruin and starvation. . . . . Boycotting, like every other creed, requires a sanction, and the sanction of Boycotting—that which stands in the rear of Boycotting, and by which alone Boycotting can in the long run be made thoroughly effective—is the murder which is not to be denounced."

Does the right hon. Gentleman recollect the words, and does his conscience prick him a little about them, for it is his own description? Yet the right hon. Gentleman is not ashamed to come before Parliament in 1887, and to say that the Boycotting which has been proved by my right hon. Friend offers no shadow of justification for the present Bill. Perhaps you may tell me that you cannot stop Boycotting by legislation, and you may quote Conservative Leaders to that effect. I do not care if you do; I do not agree with them; and I think the fact that when the last Crimes Act was dropped Boycotting increased four-fold is a pretty strong argument in my favour. But you can, at least, put a stop to the murders which, as the right hon. Gentleman told us, alone give a sanction to Boycotting, and the way to stop those murders is this. [A Home Rule MEMBER: What murders?] An hon. Member says "What murders?" If he will wait a few moments I will tell him of one which he cannot deny. The way to stop these murders is by the adoption of the Bill now before the House. The right hon. Gentleman seemed the other night to derive great satisfaction from the fact that Boycotting and intimidation are now generally separated from outrage and from crime. I admit that to some extent, perhaps, that is true to-day. But why are they more often separated now? The reason is notorious. The right hon. Gentleman knows it just as well as I know it, and everybody knows it. Such is the perfection to which the organization of the National League has been brought that the fear of the murder which is not to be denounced—the certainty that some cruel and brutal punishment will follow swiftly any disobedience to its orders—is sufficient of itself, in nine cases out of ten, to insure obedience to their behests, whatever they may be. But it is not always so. There are some people still left in Ireland who refuse to bow down to this cruel and tyrannous association, and whenever that happens murder and crime follow swiftly in its train; and, consequently, they are not always separated from each other even at the present time. A very remarkable instance of this is given in the Blue Book in the evidence of a witness on whom the right hon. Gentleman himself evidently places great reliance, for he quoted him over and over again in the course of one of these debates. The attention of the right hon. Gentleman, I remember, was drawn one night to this particular piece of evidence by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson). He was invited by the hon. and gallant Gentleman to read it. He did not read it, however, and I think he was quite right. I think he showed a wise discretion in not reading it. It would have been uncommonly awkward for his argument at the time; but I am going to read it now. This question was put to Sir Redvers Buller—

> "In fact, owing to the organization of the League, the enforcement of legal obligations in these districts has become an impossibility?"

His reply was—

> "Quite so; you cannot collect a shop debt, hardly. There was a man murdered the other day on account of a shop debt on the other side of Tralee. The crops of a farmer were seized by a shopkeeper, who employed a labourer to cut some oats, and he was shot the same night."

So it has come to this—that you cannot even collect a shop debt in disturbed parts of the country without running the risk of some monstrous crime and outrage following that night; and, yet, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman is able to see nothing in all this that can possibly justify the introduction of this Bill. I should think that evidence enough had been adduced already to satisfy the most exacting of opponents ten times over as to the present state of Ireland and the imperative necessity for strengthening the law. But I will give one other reason yet which has not been mentioned up to now; and I think it must convince even the right hon. Gentleman. It is now about 10 months since the Home Rule scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was rejected and since the verdict of the House of Commons was emphatically endorsed by the newly-enfranchised constituencies of the country. What was the state of Ireland then? Were the constituencies right or wrong in their decision? Has the state of Ireland been better or worse since then? I do not hear any hon. Members say that it has been better. If they did that would be the most cogent argument possible in favour of our rejection of that Bill. If it has not been better, has it been worse? Is that the opinion of hon. Members? They say it has been worse. I should like very much to know whether the right hon. Gentleman agrees with that assertion? It would be a valuable admission for the purposes of my argument. What was the condition of Ireland a year ago, and why were his great legislative changes proposed by the right hon. Gentleman? He has told us himself—

> "This change," the right hon. Gentleman said, "is proposed in order to meet the first necessities of civilized society. Social order is not broken up in Ireland; it is undermined; it is sapped, and, by general and universal confession, it imperatively requires to be dealt with."

Now, that was the language of the right hon. Gentleman a year ago; and I ask the House to consider what is the position of the right hon. Gentleman to-night? I have quoted his own words as to the state of Ireland 12 months ago. It is not denied by any human being that it is worse to-day than it was at that time. The right hon. Gentleman knows that remedial legislation alone is useless, and he knows that we are precluded from adopting his own schemes; and yet he has the assurance to come before Parliament and to declare that the grounds and allegations upon which the Government have asked for this measure are absolutely insufficient and unsatisfactory altogether. I pass now to another objection which has been urged against this measure. The objection is that there is a fundamental distinction between the circumstances of 1881 and the circumstances of 1887. That objection was raised by the right hon. Gentleman, who said—

> "The fundamental distinction between this period and 1881 is this—whereas now the demand of the people has been almost universally restricted to just abatements, as can be proved from the evidence laid before us, in 1881 there was a movement in progress which was growing to be, and a few months after the statement of Mr. Forster was avowed and declared to be, a movement against the payment of rent altogether."

When the right hon. Gentleman made that statement he challenged contradiction upon it. I am going to contradict him now. That statement is not altogether an accurate description of the case. The movement against all rent only arose after the hon. Member for Cork and his friends were arrested; and, unless I am misinformed, that movement was started in retaliation for their imprisonment in Kilmainham Gaol. What they were doing before they were arrested and what they were arrested for was precisely the same thing as that which is being done by the Plan of Campaign at the present moment, as I will show to the House conclusively out of the words of the right hon. Gentleman. On the 7th of October, 1881, the right hon. Gentleman declared that—

> "For nearly the first time in the history of Christendom a body—a small body—of men has arisen who are not ashamed to preach in Ireland the doctrines of public plunder."

Now, that was a charge the gravity of which it was impossible to exaggerate, and how did he support it? He said that—

> "He took as the representative of the opinions he denounced the name of the hon. Member for Cork."

And what were those opinions? I will give them in the exact words which he used. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Months ago Mr. Parnell told the people that they ought to pay no rents they had covenanted to pay; that, whether they were able or not able, they were under no obligation to pay those rents, but that they must pay rents according to the views which were set down in Griffith's valuation. In fact,"

he said—and I beg the attention of the House to the statement, because it is so exactly descriptive of the present situation—

> "the announcement amounted to this—that they were themselves to substitute an arbitrary standard for the standard to which they had themselves individually agreed."

Why, that is the very thing which the leaders and the moving spirits of the Plan of Campaign are doing at this moment! There is not an hon. Gentleman who will get up and deny it. If I wanted a description of their action and their conduct I could not have found a description more accurate than that with which he has provided me. Well, Sir, these are the opinions which called forth the just indignation and the censures of the right hon. Gentleman. Now, I will give the very words in which those censures were expressed—

> "I ask you," he said, "as honest men, not as politicians, not as Liberals, not in any other capacity, I ask you whether it is possible to describe proceedings like these in any words more just than the promulgation of sheer plunder?"

Now, Sir, that was the language of the right hon. Gentleman in 1881; but what is going on at the present time? The right hon. Gentleman is hoist with his own petard as surely no statesman was ever hoist before, and it is upon this miserable, flimsy, worthless, and utterly unreal distinction that he is not ashamed to take his stand to-day. And he seems to think that it reflects no discredit upon himself or upon the character of English statesmen that he should lend the whole weight of his great authority and influence to those very doctrines of public plunder which he formerly denounced, for which he imprisoned hon. Gentlemen opposite, and against which he invoked the very selfsame powers of the law which he denounces the Government for asking to-night. The right hon. Gentleman was appealing at that time to a great English audience in the town of Leeds in October, 1881. And I, too, will appeal to him in my turn to-night, and I ask him now, not as a Liberal, not as a politician, not in any other capacity, I ask him as an honest man—to use his own expression: as an honest man—I ask him, as an honest man, to get up in his place and make it clear—which he has never done till now—to make it clear to Ireland and to all the world, in words that cannot be mistaken, that as far as he is concerned he has neither lot nor part in, and that he will have nothing whatever to do with, the doctrines and the promulgation of the doctrines of sheer plunder. Sir, I pass for a moment to the consideration of other matters which have been raised by the hon. Baronet who seconded the Amendment. You may tell me that since all this has happened there has been a great fall in the prices of agricultural produce, and that, therefore, the whole situation has completely changed. The hon. Baronet who seconded the Amendment dwelt upon the great and terrible loss incurred by Irish tenants during the last few years, and he had the courtesy—or rather the want of courtesy—to tell us on this side of the House that we had not the slightest sympathy with them. [*Home Rule cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen who cheer that statement must pardon me if I repudiate it altogether. We have just as much sympathy with the tenants in their losses as any Party in this House. If tenants are poor and houseless it is a duty incumbent upon all classes of the community—and not one only—to bear the burden of their relief. [An Irish MEMBER: Protection.] Well, I have no objection to that, but I do not intend to propose it. When the hon. Baronet contrasts the abatements of rents in England with those which have been made in Ireland, he ought to remember how totally different is the position of landlords and tenants in the two countries. Their position was entirely altered by the legislation of the right hon. Gentleman in 1881. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) stated the other night that this was a Bill for exacting exorbitant rents. I dispute that proposition altogether. But, supposing for argument's sake he is right, who fixed those rents? The landlords had no more to do with it than you or I. [*A laugh.*] When the hon. Member laughs at that statement it is evident he has not taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the most elementary provisions of the Irish Land Act. Rents were fixed under the Land Act of the right hon. Gentleman entirely without the consent and against the will of the landlords; and the right hon. Gentleman, I suppose, as compensation for that unusual and unprecedented interference with the rights of property, gave the landlords a solemn and a binding guarantee on two points in particular; first, that under no circumstances whatsoever should that rent be disturbed for 15 years, and, secondly, that if for any cause it was not paid their land should be restored to them if they wished it. That land was in many cases that I know of brought under Parliamentary title, and is just as much the absolute property of the landlord as are the coats on the backs and the purses in the pockets of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I heard an hon. Member the other night denounce Irish landlords in language of which he ought to have been ashamed. He described them as thieves and robbers, not to speak of their being rack-renters beside. Violent language is generally weak language, and perhaps it was to cover the weakness of his case that the Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. T. D. Sullivan) was so violent that night. But if there be any theft or robbery in relation to this matter—it is not my opinion mind; I am only quoting the Lord Mayor of Dublin—the author of that theft and the author of that robbery is sitting on the Front Bench opposite? [*Home Rule cries of* "No, no!"] He fixed those rents; he gave this solemn binding guarantee to them; and I say it is an outrage on every sense of decency and fairness to turn round now upon the Irish landlords because they claim the fulfilment of the solemn bargain which, at the instance of the right hon. Gentleman, Parliament made with them. Hon. Gentlemen opposite boast greatly of their love of justice. Well, I want to put to them this question—supposing prices had risen instead of fallen, would they have come forward to disturb the existing arrangements? Not a bit of it—they would never have dreamt of it for a moment. But if the landlords are precluded from gain in a case of rise in the prices of produce, why are they to suffer when prices fall? And how is it possible for any man to advance that proposition under the shelter and in the name of justice? When hon. Gentlemen opposite speak of bad landlords in Ireland, the right hon. Gentleman, I observed, fell into that error himself. I should like to remind them of this—that, strictly speaking, where judicial rents prevail there is no such thing as landlords good or bad in Ireland at all. That is not my opinion only; it is the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman. I have been a Member of the House for many years and remember all the debates upon the Irish Land Bills in past years, and in 1870 the right hon. Gentleman, arguing at that time with the ability with which he always argues questions, against fixity and security of tenure, said this—

> "The effect of that provision will be that the landlord will become a mere pensioner and rent-charger on the estate which is now his own, and it will probably denude him of his interest in, and, what is more, absolve him of his duties in regard to the land. I, for one, confess that I cannot support it, nor is it in accordance with the sentiments of my Colleagues."

That, however, is exactly what the right hon. Gentleman did shortly afterwards, and I say it is monstrous now to turn round on the Irish landlords and denounce them in the way I have described. I have thought it right to make these few observations in vindication of my brother landlords in the other country. I think it is unnecessary to say more, because I believe that the provisions of the Government Bill which has been introduced into the House of Lords will be sufficient to cut away the last shadow of a pretence for the contention of hon. Gentlemen opposite. Well, Sir, I think I have said quite enough to show the hollowness, the falsity, and shallowness of the objections which have been raised against this Bill; but I want to say one word as to the statement that coercion has always failed in the past and will fail in the future. That was conclusively disposed of by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham the other night, when he spoke of the administration of Lord Spencer. I was never one of those who joined in the outcry against Lord Spencer. There is no doubt that under his administration a marked improvement did take place in the condition of Ireland. But before Lord Spencer went to Ireland coercion had failed, and the reason was obvious. It failed because of the vacillating way in which it was administered by the Government of the right hon. Gentleman. It was hardly possible that coercion could succeed when administered in that way. The right hon. Gentleman imprisoned hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House on one day, and then upon the next he proceeded to make Kilmainham Treaties with them. That is exactly what occurred under the administration of the Habeas Corpus Act of that time. Formerly all measures of this nature, so far as I remember them, at all events, have been limited by a fixed period of time. Consequently, it is notorious that they have proved a source of sore temptation when the time approached for their renewal—a temptation to the Government to cater for the Irish vote by promising not to renew them. In this case that temptation will no longer operate in future. But it does not follow that it is to remain on the Statute Book for ever. I look forward to the time when the just and firm administration both of the repressive and remedial measures which have been introduced in the present Parliament, and which I earnestly hope are destined to become law during the present Session, will have conquered and laid low the demon of disorder and disaffection in Ireland, and when peace and prosperity and quiet and contentment, by the blessing of Providence, may again prevail in a prosperous and smiling land; when, Sir, measures of this kind will be no more necessary in Ireland than in England or Scotland at the present time, and when this Bill may be safely repealed. This measure is aimed at the abettors and perpetrators of outrage, at men who were described by the right hon. Gentleman in 1881 as "the dangerous classes of the country" then, and who are still the dangerous classes at the present time. In a word, we found our case on this—the return to the ordinary law has absolutely failed; juries will not convict in Ireland according to the facts as they are viewed by the Government, as they are viewed by the Judges, and, as we believe, by the whole people at large. The failure of the administration of justice in Ireland is consequently complete. That failure is not disputed and is not contradicted by any hon. Member on the opposite side of the House. That is a condition of affairs which no Government that is worthy of the name can tolerate for a moment, and as I have shown by what I have said we have no other alternative than the measure now before us. We have, as I believe, the voice of the people—the voice of the nation—behind us. The mandate was given to us emphatically at the last General Election. That mandate we intend, and we are determined to carry it out. We ask the sanction of the House of Commons to a measure which, in the words of a distinguished Leader of the Opposition, "can injure no man and touch no man who seeks lawful ends by lawful means;" and that measure, so far as it depends upon us, we are determined shall take its place on the Statute Book of England and without delay.

Sir CHARLES RUSSELL (Hackney, S.): There is one taunt that cannot be truly levelled at the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin). Whatever may be said of the policy he advocates and of the statesmanship of the views he expresses, it must, at all events, be admitted that the right hon. Gentleman has throughout been consistent. He has been a consistent supporter of the policy of coercion, and an equally consistent opponent of the Land Act of 1870, and still more of the Land Act of 1881, and of everything to ameliorate the condition of the bulk of the Irish people. The right hon. Gentleman has endeavoured to show that there exists no real distinction between the condition of things in Ireland at the present time and in 1881-2, when the Liberal Government of that day were parties to bringing in and passing a strong measure of coercion. I am not myself concerned to draw any fine distinctions on this point. I opposed the measure of coercion of 1881-2 and voted against my Party, and I shall vote against the Bill of the Government now. But the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has admitted that there was a great access of crime in 1881-2 beyond what there is now. Since that time, moreover, you have given to Ireland by the Reform Act of 1885 a full and free voice to express its views and wishes Constitutionally. Now you know what is the will of Ireland. In 1881 the majority of the Irish Representatives, unhappily as I thought, were in favour of a policy of coercion. In 1887 the vast majority of the Irish Representatives — about five-sixths — are opposed to your policy of coercion. In addition to that you have now arrayed against coercion the great bulk of the Liberal Party. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said that the fact of more or less opposition to this Bill cannot alter the duty of the Government. I agree. But it ought to suggest grave doubts to the right hon. Gentleman and his Party as to the policy of a measure of coercion to find it opposed by the vast majority of the Constitutionally elected Representatives of Ireland and the great bulk of the Constitutionally elected Members of the Liberal Party. The right hon. Gentleman said this Bill was the only alternative to repeal of the Union. But was that the alternative on which the Tory Party went to the country at the last Election? Did they obtain a mandate from the country in favour of coercion? Certainly not. Did they not say that a resolute, consistent Tory Government administering the ordinary law with firmness would suffice for all purposes? I could quote from the addresses of hon. Members opposite to show how they repudiated the idea of having again to touch the pitch of coercion. The right hon. Gentleman, with, if he will permit me to say so, very questionable taste, referred to the old exploded libel about the Kilmainham Treaty. I want to know is it the view of the Party opposite that no regard is to be had in the government of Ireland to the views and opinions of the Leaders of the Irish people? Is that their view of Constitutional government? Has it always been their view? If I am not mistaken, the right hon. Gentleman held a distinguished, though not very onerous, Office in the Conservative Government of 1885. Was the series of interviews between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell the beginning of a new "Treaty?" I never blamed Lord Carnarvon for this. Lord Carnarvon, charged with the grave responsibility of the government of Ireland, sought to do what in every Constitutionally governed country every Governor ought to do—he resorted to those who could give him the best advice of the state and opinion of the country. The right hon. Gentleman has alluded to the subject of Boycotting, and, contrary to the whole tendency of the enormous Blue Book lately presented to the House, he arrived at the conclusion that murder is the sanction of Boycotting.

MR. CHAPLIN: I quoted the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) as stating that murder was the only sanction which made Boycotting effective.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lincolnshire referred to an isolated case of murder mentioned in the evidence of General Buller. That was a lamentable case—a crime which we all heartily regret and condemn. But will the right hon. Gentleman point to one syllable in the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller which connects that crime with the League or with any local association? This crime stood revealed as an isolated crime, without any connection whatever with the Land League. Well, Sir, I have not myself hitherto taken any part in the discussions on this Bill. I have preferred to wait until I should hear the defence made for it by its two principal defenders, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). I have also waited until the proposals of the Government were textually before us. With a full sense of responsibility I have considered this matter, and I say with deliberation that this Bill is more wide-reaching in its consequences—it interferes to a larger extent—than any Bill that has ever preceded it with the Constitutional rights and liberty of the Irish people, and it has been supported by a more meagre argument and more flimsy evidence than any Coercion Bill ever before laid before Parliament. I do not know, and I cannot therefore enter fully into, the feelings of right hon. Gentlemen opposite; but I should have thought that the feeling uppermost in their minds would be not to treat this as a light matter, not to treat the opposition to it as a thing which was to be taken of course, not to denounce as accessories in crime and disorder those who conscientiously adopt views different to their own, but that they would have been oppressed with a feeling of shame that, representing as they do the great community of England which had had the government of Ireland for so many years, the outcome of all their policy had resulted in nothing better than this wide-weeping, far-reaching, stringent measure of further repression. What is the case for the Bill? I wish to state it fairly in order that I may try to meet it fairly. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said—"We do not base our case upon crime."

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): Not on statistics.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL: Not on statistics of crime. I suppose that means not on crime that can be authentically brought to the knowledge of the House as having taken place. The right hon. Gentleman said he did not rest his case upon agrarian crime, and that it was true that in 1880, 1881, and 1882 the amount of agrarian crime was largely in excess of what now exists. Taking away from the record of Irish crime crimes directly or indirectly connected with agrarian causes, I think it is not too much to say that Ireland is freer from crime than any other country on the face of the earth. That being so, one would have thought that the statesmanlike course would have been to go to the root of the evils causing the crime; but they did not do that—Her Majesty's Government postponed their remedial measures. All we know so far is this—that Her Majesty's Government reject the chief recommendations of their own Commissioners, and that upon this question of coercion they reject the wise and prudent advice of the only Member of that Commission who could be said in any sense to be a popular Representative upon it—the only man upon that Commission whose position could give him any right to speak in the name of the Irish tenant class. It would not be in Order, Sir, for me to discuss the measure that has been introduced into the House of Lords, and I do not propose to do so. I may, however, say this—that while I am in favour, as I was in 1881, of the inclusion of such leaseholders as desire to come under the benefits of the Act of 1881, yet of the rest of the Bill I have very serious misgivings. I greatly doubt whether it rightly deserves the character or description of being a Tenants' Relief Bill; certainly some of its provisions point much more directly to the relief of Irish landlords. As regards one provision, which takes away one odious step in the process of eviction, it is supposed to be in favour of the Irish tenant, but it is directly the opposite. It removes the one step in the odious process of eviction which has to some extent acted as a deterrent upon Irish landlords in carrying their legal right of eviction to the utmost. I confess I do not understand why the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) should have referred to that provision in the Land Bill as one calculated "to appease the consciences of Englishmen," instead of attempting to justify it as one to satisfy the just demands of the Irish people. Statistics of crime not being the case for the Government, it is not surprising that we have not been given many instances, though such instances of crime as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has stated he relies upon have not been very happy selections. We have had speeches from the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and from the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington), and notably a speech from the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). I appeal to any candid man as to whether the speech of the hon. Member for Cork in particular did not make a very serious breach in the case of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, and whether the reply which the right hon. Gentleman attempted to make to that speech did in any considerable degree repair that breach? What is the case of the Government? They say, first, there is the difficulty of obtaining evidence; and, secondly, that when the evidence has been obtained there is the difficulty of getting juries to convict. The next argument is the usurpation of the National League; and there is a further argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which I do not think sufficient attention has been drawn, that it is necessary to pass this Coercion Bill in order, forsooth, to prevent the frustration of the land schemes which the Government are going to pass. I will allude to each of these topics briefly. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland gave the House a considerable number of figures with regard to charges of crime made and convictions obtained. These figures undoubtedly show a marked discrepancy between the charges of crime and the number of people that came forward to prosecute. But I would appeal to my hon. and learned Friends opposite as to whether, for those figures to have any weight, it is not necessary for us to know the circumstances of each case. We ought to know whether or not a large proportion of these offences were crimes committed in the darkness of night, when it was impossible to prove the identity of the criminals. In other cases, it may be the evidence was exceedingly slight, or the charges trivial. Until the Government tell us the circumstances of each case, it is impossible for these statistics to have great weight. It is suggested that terrorism is the cause of so few people coming forward to prosecute. I will admit that there are a large number of cases in which, from some cause or other, some persons in Ireland cognizant of offences against the law are unwilling to come forward to prosecute; but I say that is much more largely due to want of sympathy with the law than from terrorism outside the law. One of the most grave complaints against this Bill, if it should become law—I admit that want of sympathy with the law in Ireland is a source of mischief and evil —one of the most serious charges against this Bill is that it does nothing to remedy that evil, but will have the effect of still further alienating the sympathies of the people from the law. What is our experience of previous Coercion Acts? I recollect when the late Mr. Forster imprisoned under his Act 1,000 men without trial on suspicion of crime. So far from the persons so imprisoned being stained in character, I have seen correspondence with some of these men in which, I suppose as a mark of distinction, they signed their names—So-and-so, "ex-suspect." The right hon. Gentleman, as I understand, relies to a great extent on the fact that juries in many cases have not taken the same views of facts as the Judges. I appeal to my hon. and learned Friends opposite, the Home Secretary and the Law Officers, as to whether it is not at least conceivable that the juries have sometimes been right and the Judges wrong? Undoubtedly Judges do sometimes make mistakes. As regards the statements put forward by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in bulk, I maintain that they are unreliable statements, and that a great many allowances must be made on the grounds I have mentioned. After making those allowances, there nevertheless remains, it is true, a number of cases on which, forming the best judgment we can, we may arrive at the conclusion that juries have not done their duty. But to what is that owing? It is to this—that jurors are called upon to administer a system of law from which their moral sense revolts, and which they believe to be made frequently an engine of oppression directed against men whom they regard as striving to do honest and useful work for their country. I do not apply that observation to such crimes as murder, or to crimes even less serious; but I do apply it to such cases as that of the hon. Member for East Mayo for standing, at whatever sacrifice to himself, between the tenants and the landlords who were proceeding by force to unjust exactions. Why, the history of juries in this country shows most clearly that they have again and again, when they were called upon to administer a law repugnant to their feelings, disregarded the direction of the Judge. It was so in cases of criminal information for sedition; it was so in cases of treason; it was so when the Criminal Code of England was a blood-stained Code. Then juries again and again refused to return verdicts of guilty in the face of evidence in order to temper the severity of the Code. So it was in the matter of duelling when, according to the average level of morals which prevailed at the time, the offence was not considered criminal. And so it was later still, when bribery was considered not a very grave, but rather a very venial offence. But I should like to use in this connection, if I may, some language stronger and more weighty than my own. Mr. Forsyth, in his *History of Trial by Jury*, quoting the words of Lord John Russell, says—

> "'It is to trial by jury,' says one whose opinion is entitled to the greatest weight on such a question, 'more than even by representation (as it at present exists) that the people owe the share they have in the government of the country. It is to trial by jury also that the Government mainly owes the attachment of the people to the laws—a consideration which ought to make our legislators very cautious how they take away this mode of trial by jury by new, trifling, and vexatious enactments.'"

Then Mr. Forsyth adds—

> "Thus it is that the power which juries possess of refusing to put the law in force has, in the words of Lord John Russell, 'been the cause of amending many bad laws which the Judges would have administered with professional bigotry, and, above all, it has this important and useful consequence, that laws totally repugnant to the feelings of the community for which they are made cannot long prevail in England.' An opposite evil may, indeed, arise in times of popular excitement. Jurors drawn from the masses of the people and under the influence of the same passions as their neighbours and fellow-citizens may paralyze the arm of Government by refusing to bring in

> verdicts of guilty where the charge is that of sedition or treason, although the case against the accused is clearly proved. This has happened at different times in this country, and it might be carried to such an extent as to render a State prosecution a hopeless attempt. But the evil suggests its own remedy. It may, I think, be safely asserted that when this universal disinclination to convict exists, even when the evidence is clear, it is time to change the measures which have provoked such a humiliating result. It is worse than useless to persist in a course of policy which renders the Executive powerless and gives a triumph to the mob in every verdict of acquittal. The tack of the vessel must be altered when she can make no headway in the course that has been hitherto steered."

I say, therefore, that this difficulty with regard to juries is somewhat exaggerated. I am not aware that there have been many recent cases—certainly none have been laid before the House—in which jurors have forgotten their oath. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I am not aware that there have been any considerable number of such cases. I know they have not been presented to the House in any form which it would be possible for hon. Members to grasp or criticize. I cannot leave this subject without saying one word more. What is it that has most discredited jury trial in Ireland? I am not now attacking any particular side of the House. It is the persistent and consistent system of jury-packing. The persons whom you selected went into the box knowing that they were expected to give the verdict you wanted, and if occasionally some got into the box whom you did not want there they regarded themselves as a sort of counterpoise. Lastly, it does not follow that where a Government fails to get a verdict the prosecution has been of no service. The very fact of a firm administration of the ordinary law, honestly carried out, even when verdicts of guilty are not obtained, is useful to the country; and one verdict obtained from a jury, in the language of the law, "indifferently chosen," would be worth 100 verdicts obtained from juries which, in the opinion of the country, were packed. One word more in this connection. There have been isolated cases, most abominable and wicked, in which jurors have been attacked for what they believed to be the conscientious discharge of their duty. I do not recollect any case since the dastardly attack upon Mr. Field; but that dastardly attack was condemned by the whole of the Irish Members, and was repudiated by the sentiment of the whole of the Irish people. The right hon. Gentleman has mentioned no such recent case. I know he did allude to language of a most reprehensible kind which appeared in *United Ireland* lecturing jurors as to what they ought to do. I join as heartily as any hon. Member of this House in condemning and reprobating any such language. But, Sir, of all the shams which have been put forward in this debate the greatest is the sham that in Ireland the people are groaning under a terrorism exercised in spite of them, and that the majority are only anxious to be relieved from it. Again and again it has been said by the right hon. Gentleman—[Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Never.] The right hon. Gentleman may allow me to finish the sentence. Again and again it has been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and still more strongly by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that this Bill is a measure to emancipate the bulk of the Irish people from the thraldom of the Land League and of a handful of men who are grinding them with ruthless tyranny. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR dissented.] The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary shakes his head; the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not. The right hon. Gentlemen must settle the matter between them.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I did not express it nearly so eloquently as the right hon. Gentleman. I did not speak of hon. Members, nor did I speak of a handful of men; but I distinctly accept the proposition that this is an emancipating Bill.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL: The National League may be right or may be wrong; its policy may be bad or may be good; it may be proper to put it down, or sustain it; but this at least is true of it—there never has been in the memory of man an organization, an association which more unanimously commanded the support of Irishmen, priests and people. Of course there are exceptions, but, speaking of the Irish people as a body, it is true to say that this association has their sympathy and support. It is remarkable that this should be questioned, in view of the statement of Sir Redvers Buller that the Irish people looked upon the National League as their salvation, as the only agency which stood between them and the extortion of impossible rents by exacting landlords. By the way, I have heard it said—I do not know whether it is true—that the original statement made by Sir Redvers Buller to the Commission was, not that the Irish people looked upon the National League as their salvation, but that it was their salvation. I have a word now to say about the Blue Book of the Commission. The formation of that Commission was hardly one to recommend it to popular support and sympathy in Ireland.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not take cases from the Blue Book at all.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL: No, the right hon. Gentleman preferred to rely upon those anonymous anecdotes which he gave the House. They were presented by him, but beyond that we had no evidence of their authenticity, no means of testing their accuracy. On the Cowper Commission there was but one man who could be said to represent the Irish tenant. It was a remarkable fact that hardly a single witness who might be supposed to know anything about the condition of Ireland from the popular standpoint and about the feeling of the Irish people, had been asked a single question before the Commission bearing upon the subject of this combination against rent, about the supposed terrorism, about Boycotting, about crime, or about crime as connected with Boycotting. The evidence relating to those subjects appears to have been given by some County Inspectors and by land agents, and the cases they referred to were generally given without the time or place where they occurred being mentioned. I am perfectly aware that it is said that these witnesses would have given both date and place if they could have done so with safety to those concerned; but, at all events, the alleged danger to the parties concerned cannot have arisen in many cases where the whole story must have been known to many people. One of the Land Commissioners used the expression that the rents in certain parts of Ireland were "shocking." The general result of the evidence which was given before the Commission is to show that wherever fair reductions of rent have been offered on the part of the landlords, the tenants have always shown an anxiety to accept them; and in such cases neither the National League nor any other association attempts to interfere. The Plan of Campaign has been denounced as being monstrous; but, for my part—I do not speak of the question of legality—I see nothing monstrous in tenants combining together to present their joint views and joint demands before their landlord, instead of each individual tenant appealing to his landlord separately. But, after all, it comes to this, will your Bill stop Boycotting? Has human ingenuity ever devised anything that would stop Boycotting? With regard to this point I should like to use language which will doubtless carry greater weight with hon. Members opposite than any of my own is likely to do. The present Prime Minister, speaking at a time when the right hon. Gentleman sitting below the Gangway opposite was a distinguished ornament of his Government, uttered this observation—and I hope that no hon. Member on this side of the House will be unfair and cynical enough to remember that it was uttered on the eve of the General Election, and at a time when it was supposed—rightly or wrongly—that cordial relations existed between the Government of the day and the Irish Party. The Prime Minister, speaking of Boycotting on the 7th of October, 1885, said—

> "It grew up constantly, in spite of the action of the Crimes Act, and it grew up for this reason —that it is a crime of that character which legislation has very great difficulty in reaching. I have seen it said that the Crimes Act diminished outrages, that Boycotting operated through outrage, and therefore that the Crimes Act diminished Boycotting. In the first place, the fact is not true. The Crimes Act did not diminish outrages. I have a return of outrages in September, during which the Crimes Act was not in existence, and comparing that with the return in August, during which it was in existence, I find that the outrages which took place in September were considerably fewer than the outrages which took place in August. There is, therefore, no ground for saying that in the present condition—I am not speaking of the past condition of the Irish temper—the Crimes Act was any restraint on outrage, and it certainly was no restraint on Boycotting. Boycotting does not operate through outrage. Boycotting is the act of a large majority of a community resolving to do a number of things which are themselves legal, and which are only illegal by the intention with which they are done."

The noble Lord went on to say—

> "Do not imagine for a moment that the Irish Government are idle or quiet or inert in putting the remedies of the ordinary law into action. At this moment 35 prosecutions for Boycotting are pending, and that alone will show you that the Irish Government are doing their best—when you consider the difficulties of getting evidence upon such a subject—are doing their best to meet the evil. I believe the truth about Boycotting is this—that it depends upon a passing humour of the majority of the population. I do not believe that in any community it is enduring. I doubt whether in any community the law has been able to offer a complete, a perfect, and a satisfactory cure, but I believe it contains its own Nemesis within itself."

It has been, in my opinion, satisfactorily shown that the action of the National League has diminished instead of increasing crime, and that it is better that the control of that association should be in the hands of responsible men rather than in those of men who have no responsibility whatever. It is surely better that agitation should be open rather than it should be turned into dark, devious, and underground channels. My case is that you have made out no sufficient ground for this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to think that hon. Members below the Gangway on this side of the House believe that they can best keep up disorder and agitation by putting a stop to the remedial legislation proposed to be introduced by Her Majesty's Government. But with regard to that point I would ask any candid man whether he believes that the land legislation of 1881 would have been possible except for the action of the Irish Representatives. Do hon. Members opposite believe that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian would have had sufficient power and force of public opinion behind him to have enabled him to make that attempt—that bold attempt—in 1881, in the face of class interests, if it had not been for the action of hon. Members below the Gangway, which made it impossible for the then existing state of things to continue. The hon. Member for Cork at that time pointed out the difficulties which the Irish tenants would have to meet in bringing their cases into the Land Court, and he proposed that the Act should be made to work automatically by reducing the rents to within a certain point of Griffith's valuation, giving power to the tenant to appeal when that point was in his opinion too high, and to the landlord to appeal when in his opinion it was too low. We hear now of propositions to make it clearer that no rent shall be paid on the tenant's improvements, and of other propositions which are to be found in the Bill which was introduced the other night—originally proposed by Irish Members—though hon. Members opposite are now professedly desirous of ameliorating the condition of the Irish tenant. Is it not perfectly sickening to hear this kind of observation from that side of the House, which represents the Party who resisted every one of these things, and who attacked the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) for his courage and manliness in rising superior to class interests and class prejudice? The whole Tory Party opposed the Land legislation of 1881—aye, and even as late as in 1885 the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), whose absence we all regret, summarized the policy of the Liberal Party in Ireland as being a policy of spoliation of the Church on the one hand and the landlords on the other. During the debate on that Land Bill, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not give it very warm sympathy; he stood by in the character of a candid and critical friend. Talk of intimidation and Boycotting, no case on record equals the Boycotting and intimidation carried on against the Land Commissioners after the Act of 1881 by the Tory Press and the Tory Party. Hardly had it passed when Members of this House and the other House of Parliament, and the Tories throughout the Kingdom, were attacking the Commissioners almost before they actually began their work. It must be remembered that they were men who were exercising a serious judicial office for which they had no security of tenure, and, with the threats of the Tory Press and the Tory landlord Representatives before their eyes, they knew well that if they did not mind their p's and q's and "spoliate" the landlords as little as possible, their tenure of Office—if a Tory Government came into Office—was at least precarious. But the Landlord Party in the House of Lords moved for a Committee of Inquiry into the working of the Act before it had been in operation for a year, and I say to that action and to that Boycotting and intimidation on the part of the Tory Press and landlords is to some extent due that which has taken place in Ireland by rents being fixed at too high a point. Now, I come to the provisions of the Bill. With regard to the clauses of the Bill that deal with the question of preliminary inquiry, I think that they are reasonable, and I have no fear about them if we could only have a fair and honest administration of them; and, in a normal condition of things, I should have no objection to their being made permanent. Then I come to the clauses dealing with the appointment of stipendiary magistrates. Who are these gentlemen? I am not going to indulge in any kind of personal abuse; but, at the same time, it is the truth that these gentlemen are not lawyers or men who have had a lawyer's training; they are the sons of gentlemen in the Army and of landed proprietors—men who are not instinct with the popular feeling, and are unable to enter into the popular sentiment. Some of them are to possess such legal knowledge as will satisfy the Lord Lieutenant. What does that mean? If it means that they are to be lawyers of standing and training, why does not the Bill say that they shall be barristers or solicitors of so many years' standing? Now, I wish the House and the country to understand that these gentlemen are not independent stipendiary magistrates in the sense in which they exist in this country. They are in constant communication with the Castle, submitting cases for its direction, and deriving and obtaining assistance, direction, and advice from the Castle. They are regarded merely as persons carrying out the details of a certain amount of executive work. But it is said that they will never do any injustice. I think we heard of a rather alarming instance in the case of the hon. Gentleman who was then Member for Westmeath (Mr. T. C. Harrington). The hon. Member for South West Lancashire and I, myself, examined into that case, which one could hardly believe. It was, however, absolutely true, and the matter was brought up in the form of a Question in the House of Commons. What was that case, and what was its sequel? We hear of the terrorism said to be practised by the Land League and the National League. The hon. Member made an honest and strong-minded appeal to the farmers of Westmeath. He reminded them that they were the recipients of special benefits under the Act; that the labourers were their friends and had stood by them; and he asked them not to be selfish, but to share their advantages with the labourers; because, if they did not, the labourers would combine together for their own benefits. That language was reported to the Castle by the local magistrate, and the report came back with the words underlined, and the direction in blue pencil, that they amounted to the offence of intimidation, and that the person who had spoken them should be prosecuted. He was prosecuted according to law, and was sent to prison. What was the sequel? In Westmeath—among those farmers over whom he had terrorized—such was the terrorism, that they returned him unopposed as their Representative to Parliament! That is an instance of the class of men to whom you are giving enormous powers—powers such as have never before been given to the same extent, under the same conditions, to the same class of persons. We see that it is an offence which comes under summary jurisdiction, to cause any person or persons either to do any act which such person or persons has, or have, a legal right to abstain from doing, or to abstain from doing any act they have a legal right to do. It is also a distinct offence

> "to incite, solicit, encourage, or persuade any other person to commit any of the offences hereinbefore mentioned."

Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary took great credit for the fact that he was not making any attack on the liberty of the Press. But, supposing the editor of *The Freeman*, or that still more objectionable person in the eyes of the Government, the editor of *United Ireland*, were to write in his paper, advising the tenants not to be in a hurry to buy their land under the Government Land Act; that the landlords were asking 20 years' purchase, but that 10 or 15 years' purchase would be the real price, what will prevent these gentlemen from being prosecuted? Where is your boasted freedom of the Press? Then, I want to know why the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has not thought fit to draw attention to the existing powers of the authorities in Ireland. Why did he not allude in his speech to the Act of 1875, which deals with the questions of intimidation following, watching, and Boycotting? In Lord Salisbury's speech he speaks of the Government at that time as having 45 prosecutions for offences of that nature. I want to know why it is that the ordinary law is not put into operation? It is said—"Oh, the reason is because under that Act the person charged could claim a jury." When you were dealing with a cognate subject relating to combinations in England, you carefully safeguarded the right to the person charged of demanding a jury. But I want to put the case still further home. Have the Government any reliable facts by which they can tell us the issue of the 45 cases of Boycotting of which Lord Salisbury spoke? How many succeeded? How many ought to have succeeded? What were the circumstances of failure? Because I am greatly mistaken, if it be not the case, that there have been convictions under the existing general law, or under the statute of Edward III., and, if so, I am justified in contending that there may be considerable action under the ordinary law in the way of dealing with offences of this kind. We have not been informed as to how this matter rests. I come next to the clauses about the change of venue. I do not dwell upon that subject beyond making this observation—that as I read the existing law in Ireland as shown by cases decided in 1858, in 1870, and in 1883, there is absolute power to change the venue where they please. [An hon. MEMBER: In Ireland.] In Ireland, in order to obtain what they call a fair and impartial trial. I want to know why that law is not sufficient? Instead of that, you have a most extraordinary contrivance. The Attorney General certifies where he thinks the venue ought to be changed, whereupon the Court "shall" change, and thereupon—and the right hon. Gentleman made a great point of this—the traverser or defendant can come to the Court and appeal successfully against such action if he can show that a fairer trial can be had somewhere else. Would it not be more straightforward to say, instead of leaving it to an executive political officer, that the Court "may, if for good cause it sees fit, change the venue?" Place the responsibility on the judicial, and not on the executive, officer. It were a mere waste of time to dwell at length now on the proposition to remove prisoners for trial from Ireland to England. [An hon. MEMBER: That is given up.] I do not know that it is yet given up. I understood that was one of the things reserved to be given up on the demand of the Liberal Unionists, in order that their potency in the councils of the Government and in the country may be made the more manifest. I remember two ill-omened precedents for this proposition—one was the precedent of Lord North, when he proposed at the time of the American War, that prisoners should be imported from America to be tried in England, a proposition which was covered with ridicule by Edmund Burke; and the other was the rising in 1745, when Scotch rebels were deported from Scotland in order to be tried at Carlisle. I suppose it is that precedent which recommends it to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay). My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness has such boundless faith in the Government, that all he needed to be told was that this was a measure directed against crime, and he was perfectly willing then to shut his eyes and swallow whatever the Government should send him. And now I come to the, in my opinion, most serious clause of all — one for which, I know no parallel—I mean the power which is given to the Lord Lieutenant to create a new class of crime. For, as I read this Bill, it gives to the Lord Lieutenant power to deal with the case of dangerous associations; and, indeed, this was admitted by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary. But where do you find your Constitutional precedent or justification for giving to the Lord Lieutenant the power to determine whether an association is, or is not, a dangerous association? Not even the ingenuity and great resource of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer can justify such a proposition. It is said that there are certain limitations under which this power is to be exercised. Sir, the limitations are worth nothing. The Proclamation is to lie on the Table of the House, and is to have effect within seven days if the House is sitting, or if Parliament be not sitting then Parliament must be summoned within 20 days. Who does not know that the Lord Lieutenant would not venture on the Proclamation unless he was doing it at the instance of the Government, who presumably command a Parliamentary majority? That is not the way in which, according to Constitutional methods, criminal legislation ought to be carried out. But it is said—"Why are you solicitous about these provisions? They only touch criminals; they have nothing to do with anything but crime." But I ask was there ever any Proclamation of a severe and drastic kind on this or any cognate subject which might not have been defended on the same grounds? Where was the despot ever found who declared that he was going to discharge his despotic measure against innocent men? He was always going to use it for the best purposes, and only against the criminal classes. I have shown by the instance of the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington) that this may be directed against men who are not criminal, and I could amplify that point by referring to many similar cases during the execution of the late Mr. Forster's Act. But above and beyond that, if I were even assured that this Bill would be administered by men of thorough fairness and thorough justice, that it would not be used to repress the free expression of popular opinion, that it would not be used to deprive tenants of the protection of which, even now, they still stand in need—if, in other words, you could suppose the existence of administrators endowed with divine powers, I should still resent and protest against this measure as an insult to the people of Ireland. It is not the strength of the blow, as hon. Members know, but the fact of the blow that makes the insult. We have been told by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) that this is a very good Bill, and the noble Lord has lifted up his hands in strong benediction of the whole of its provisions. He took very great credit for his powers of prophecy. The noble Lord has boxed the whole compass of prophecy, and I hope I may be forgiven if I say that he reminds me strongly of the professional sporting tipster, who sends out to each of his subscribers a different horse for the forthcoming race, and then when one of them wins, as one must win, he congratulates his clients and himself upon his powers of prophecy. But the noble Lord said something more. He said that this Coercion Bill was but the ploughing up of the ground, and the harrowing of the furrows in order to prepare it in the natural course of agriculture for the seed, the fruitful seed, of beneficent legislation. I would suggest to the noble Lord whether this would not be more in keeping with the facts—the surgeon who finds it necessary to apply a healing and strengthening plaster to his patient is to begin by flaying and excoriating him, in order that the healing plaster may have a wider and more beneficent operation? But I answer the noble Lord by the words of the noble Lord himself. They were spoken on January 31 last. Two months have elapsed since then—only two months. Will any hon. Member get up and say that anything has happened in those two months which justifies or renders necessary this Coercion Bill? No one can do so. On that occasion the noble Lord said—

> "I see nothing unsatisfactory—always speaking comparatively—nothing specially alarming, in the case of Ireland at present. . . . The hopeful feature is that, in spite of all the prophecies we have heard from hon. Gentlemen opposite, that there was going to be such a desperate outbreak this year of what is euphemistically called 'the wild justice of revenge,' Ireland is practically free from crime at this present moment. . . . But the great and main fact, and one which the House may well take notice of and found hopes upon, is, that crime in Ireland has been reduced to its normal level, and even below its normal level."

Then he goes on to use an illustration, which I recommend to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman—

> "I should say this much, that Ireland appears to me at the present moment to be something like a high-spirited and mettlesome horse, which has been extremely badly ridden for some time. There is a certain school of professors of political equitation, principally represented by *The Times* newspaper, who seem to think that the best way to ride a horse of that kind is to be continually jobbing him in the mouth, continually hitting him on the head with the whip, and continually digging him in the side with the spurs. This school of professors persist passionately in the advocacy of these measures, although they see rider after rider laid on his back in the ditch."—(3 *Hansard*, [310] 285-6.)

The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had better look out. The noble Lord referred to the existence of the Plan of Campaign, and said of it, that if Irish juries were to go on in what he described as a very curious fashion, it might be necessary in that regard to come to Parliament for further powers. But has anybody said that the Plan of Campaign, either as to its character or its extent—condemn it in as strong terms as you like in regard to illegality—would justify the present measure, or anything like it? What is the state of the case against the Plan of Campaign? It is this—that out of about 40 estates—principally small estates—the Plan of Campaign has resulted in the obtaining, as on the Dillon estates, of 20 per cent reduction; on the Dunsandle estate of 20 per cent; on the O'Brien estate of 15 per cent; and on some other estates of reductions of from 15 to 20 per cent. Hon. Members may condemn the mode by which this was done, if they think it was an illegal combination, as the Judges are supposed to have said; but is there an hon. Member, recollecting the abatements voluntarily made by just landlords in this country, and recollecting the needs of the case, which your own Land Commission points out, who will say that he does not rejoice at the result, however he objects to the means? The operation of the Plan of Campaign is not such as to afford any justification for this Bill. It is proposed, however, to make this measure perpetual in its character. It is to be a part, not of a hateful, temporary policy of expediency, but a permanent measure of government. This is a confession of failure to govern Ireland. It blows to the wind the pretences of many hon. Members opposite and of many so-called Liberal Unionists to govern Ireland while disregarding the wishes of the Irish people—to govern it without repression, and by ordinary and Constitutional law. I have heard the question asked by more than one hon. Member—"But what is there in Ireland that presents any special difficulty, or any special grievance?" I commend to those hon. Gentlemen who ask that question the words that were referred to, but which were not read in full, by the hon. Baronet who proposed this Motion (Sir Bernhard Samuelson). They are the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), contained in a speech delivered at Holloway on June 17, 1885. He said—

> "This question is a national question as well as a parochial question, and the pacification of Ireland at this moment depends, I believe, on the concession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of its purely domestic business. What is the alternative? Are you content, after nearly 80 years of failure, to renew once more the dreary experience of repressive legislation? Is it not discreditable to us that even now it is only by un-Constitutional means that we are able to secure peace and order in one portion of Her Majesty's Dominions? I do not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralized and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step, he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work, without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by an English official appointed by a foreign government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority. I say the time has come to reform altogether the absurd and irritating anachronism which is known as Dublin Castle. That is the work to which the new Parliament will be called, and I believe that by its successful accomplishment, it will do more to secure the strength, the character, and the influence of the nation than by the addition of any amount, however large, to the expenditure of the nation for naval or military purposes, that it will go further to maintain our weight in the councils of Europe than by any amount of bluster in our relations with foreign countries; and that it will do more to promote the true interests of the people of the United Kingdom than by any extension of the Empire, which it is our business to govern well and wisely before we seek to multiply our responsibilities or enlarge our obligations."

I make this observation upon the right hon. Gentleman's statement, that neither its strength, nor its wisdom, nor its truth is weakened by the present position of the right hon. Gentleman, however difficult it may be for that right hon. Gentleman to reconcile that notable utterance with his present position. But the fact is, that the solution of the Irish Question will not even be touched by your Bill. You are dealing with some of the symptoms, you are not attempting to deal with the causes. The difficulties in Ireland are partly agrarian, and partly political. I admit that agrarian legislation would not remove those difficulties; the political difficulty would still face you. But you would be face to face with it under different conditions; and certainly such agrarian legislation as you propose to pass, as far as we can at present see, will do little to deal thoroughly or comprehensively with the agrarian part of the question. It, therefore, only remains to ask, Can you govern Ireland against the consent of the people of Ireland; or are you willing, at least, to try the experiment of trying to govern Ireland with the consent of the people of Ireland? In every representative Constitutional system of government, the people governed have the governors who are placed over them responsible to them —the governed. In Ireland this is reversed. The governors of Ireland do not look to, and care little for, the public opinion of Ireland. They look over the heads of the Irish people, and if they can satisfy what the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale called the conscience of Englishmen, they cared nothing about the opinion of Ireland. That is the problem which you must face, and which you must deal with. It is true that you have got a power in Ireland which is not a legal power. It is true that, side by side with your executive power, you have got a power which, in many respects, is more powerful than the power of the Government. I make that admission to you; but whence does this power derive its force and its sanction? From the sympathy and the support of the people of Ireland. Surely it is a problem worth trying to solve; surely it is worth trying to win that power to the side of law and order, and to place upon the shoulders of those who represent and who wield that power the responsibility without which power is always a source of danger. That is the proposition to which, as statesmen, you ought to address yourselves. This Bill does not touch the problem. It is a Bill for further repression, and for forging fresh fetters for the Irish people, and it will justly be regarded as a Bill which, on the one hand, takes away protective agency from the Irish tenant class, who still need it, while, on the other hand, it throttles the free and open expression of public opinion in Ireland.

MR. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) said, he was glad to have an opportunity on behalf of his constituents of entering a protest against this infamous and iniquitous Bill. He called it "infamous and iniquitous" because he was satisfied that its object was not to maintain law and order, but to bolster up a diseased and tottering land system, to grind down Irish tenants, to wring from them rents that they could not pay, and to turn them out of the homes of their fathers. The Bill was as unwise and unnecessary as it was unjust and immoral, and it could only have the effect of greatly increasing and aggravating the difficulty of governing Ireland. Putting agitators in prison, whether they were priests or Parnellite Members of this House, was not the way to extinguish them; it was the way to add to their popularity and power. He had another complaint to make against the Members of the Treasury Bench, and that was that they had taken away the Easter holidays. He protested against that not so much because hon. Members wanted a holiday, as because they wanted to address their constituents. In his opinion the Government had deliberately taken away the holidays in order that Members of the Opposition might not have an opportunity of addressing their constituents, and in order that they themselves might have an excuse for not addressing theirs. They wanted to do things in their own high-handed way, as Tories always had wanted to do things, without taking the country into consultation or confidence. The Tories were going back to their old, bad policy of coercion and stern repression of what they were pleased to call disorder and sedition. That was the traditional policy of their Party. As it was in the days of Pitt, and Eldon, and Liverpool, and Sidmouth, so it was now. They had got into a groove from which it seemed they could not escape. Then, in addition to the spur of their hereditary Party propensities, they were urged on by a number of violent people—squires, colonels, parsons, and others — who were all for a short way with the Irish. Now, there was one thing he wished to remind hon. Gentlemen opposite of, and it was this, that a great many of them, just as much as hon. Members on the Opposition Benches, were pledged to their constituents against coercion. He did not say that at the last Election they, in terms, told their constituents that they would always vote against coercion, but they certainly pledged themselves that they would not vote for coercion unless an overwhelming case was made out in favour of it, and they laid stress upon the point that although they might not be willing to grant Home Rule to Ireland, they were in favour of the political equality of the Three Kingdoms. Notwithstanding the clever manner in which hon. Members opposite had deprived the Opposition of the opportunity of addressing their constituents during the Easter Recess, a very strong agitation against coercion would be set on foot, and he hoped hon. Members opposite would keep their eyes upon the agitation of the next few weeks; because if the result was to show that there was a strong probability that the country was against coercion, they ought either to withdraw their Bill or take the sense of the country in regard to it. Hon. Members opposite appeared to be much surprised that such a strenuous and vigorous opposition should be offered to their Bill, but they forgot that a great change had taken place since the last coercive measure was passed, not only in the enfranchisement of the democracy of England, but also in the enfranchisement of the democracy of Ireland. The present was the first Coercion Bill which was opposed by a majority of the Representatives from Ireland. He reminded hon. Members opposite that they themselves, by the manner in which they played fast-and-loose with coercion in the summer of 1885, did everything they could to place difficulties in the way of passing any future measure of coercion. He desired to quote a few words from a speech made on the 5th of March, 1886, at a dinner of the Eighty Club, by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), who, he believed, was warmly supporting the Ministry in passing this measure. In that speech, the noble Lord pointed out that if any future difficulties arose in the way of the passing of any coercive legislation, those difficulties ought properly to be placed at the door of the Conservative Party. The noble Lord said—

> "The action of the late Conservative Government in respect to Ireland cannot be without its permanent effect upon the government of Ireland. The abandonment last June of the Crimes Act which the former Government had acknowledged their intention of attempting to renew, the laxity of the administration of law during the intervening time, the uncertain attitude in which the Conservative Government met Parliament the other day—all these things cannot be without a lasting and permanent effect upon the problem of the government of Ireland."

And the noble Lord went on to say that the result of the conduct of the Tories would probably be to make coercion impossible for the future. They were told by some of the supporters of the Government that coercion meant really nothing more than a firm administration of the existing law, and did not hurt decent, law-abiding people. That was a plausible way of putting it. But coercion meant a great deal more than that. Even in its milder forms it meant the suspension of the elementary rights of citizenship, while, in its severer forms coercion might include the suspension of trial by jury, the supervision or suppression of the Press, the right of invading private houses by day or night, the stopping of public meetings, the putting men in prison without trial or even without charge, the imposition of irksome restraints on the freedom of individuals, and the substitution of government by spies, detectives, and informers for those Constitutional liberties which in this free country they had been taught from childhood to cherish as their dearest possession. Coercion, then, was irritating and annoying to individuals, and an insult and an indignity to the nation coerced; and patriotic citizens were justified in taking every legitimate opportunity of showing how much they resented such treatment. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) was a supporter of this coercive legislation of the Ministry. The noble Lord not very long ago took precisely the same view as he (Mr. Shirley) did of the annoyance and injustice which coercion caused, because, speaking at Bow in January, 1885, he said—

> "It comes to this, that the policy of the Government in Ireland is to declare, on the one hand, by the passing of the Reform Bill, that the Irish people are perfectly capable of exercising for the advantage of the Empire the highest rights and privileges of citizenship; and by the proposal to renew the Crimes Act they simultaneously declare, on the other hand, that the Irish people are utterly incapable of performing with advantage to society the most ordinary duties of citizenship. All I can say is, that if such an incoherent, such a ridiculous, —such a dangerously ridiculous—combination of acts can be a policy, then, thank God, the Conservative Party have no policy."

That was the opinion of the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) in 1885, whatever it was now. [*Cheers.*] He (Mr. Shirley) ventured to say that if coercion, which was said to be the firm administration of the law, if such a policy were applied to England, we should have an insurrection in a week, and yet this suspension of the elementary rights of citizenship was the system by which we had been trying to govern Ireland during the whole of the present century. On the 6th of July, 1885, the Earl of Carnarvon made a speech in the House of Lords, in the course of which he said—

> "I have looked through a good many of the Acts which have been passed during the last generation for Ireland, and I have been astonished to find that ever since the year 1847, with some very short intervals, which are hardly worth mentioning, Ireland has been under exceptional coercive legislation. No sane man can admit that this is a satisfactory or wholesome state of things, and it does seem to me that it is very desirable, if possible, to extricate ourselves from this miserable habit, and to aim at some wholesome and better solution. But more than being undesirable, I hold that such legislation is practically impossible if it is to be continually and indefinitely re-enacted."—(3 *Hansard.*)

He quite agreed with Lord Carnarvon in that opinion. Comparisons had been made as to the circumstances which justified this Coercion Bill, and those which were brought forward in support of the Bills in 1881 and 1882. What did the figures show? He would quote those given by Lord Carnarvon in the speech he had just referred to. In 1878 there were 301 agrarian crimes committed; in 1879 the number amounted to 860; in 1880 there were 2,580, and in 1881, 4,439. In that, as in every former case, when a Coercion Bill had been brought forward, the Ministry of the day had thought it their duty to lay the foundation for the Bill on statistics of that kind. They had shown the existence of a large and increasing amount of agrarian crime. What was the condition of things now? In the present case the Government appeared to rely principally on the inventions and exaggerations of *The Times* and *The Standard*, and on the interesting and entertaining anecdotes of the Chief Secretary. There was nothing solid or substantial to support their view of the state of Ireland. But the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) had shown that a number of charges by Judges might be brought forward in support of the view that the present condition of Ireland was satisfactory. Judges' charges could, in fact, be quoted both ways; and they were very unsatisfactory evidence as to the condition of the country, because they were made up of facts obtained second-hand by the Judges. A Judge ought to confine himself to the matter in hand, and ought not to convert his charges to Grand Juries into political harangues. Then they heard a great deal about Boycotting and intimidation. Well, the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller showed that at the time he was examined intimidation and Moonlighting were both on the decline. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) said Boycotting was always followed by the sanction of murder. That was not so. There had been Boycotting in past times when murder had been the sanction, but that was not so at the present time. But Boycotting could not be prevented by legislation. It was simply the method by which any given community marked its displeasure with regard to an individual who went contrary to the stream, and insisted on the exercise of its right of exclusive dealing. We had Boycotting in England, and it was not easy to put a stop to it. The Dames of the Primrose League could practise it against those who would not support Conservative candidates, and the members of the Bar Boycotted those who would not conform to their customs. At school, offending boys were sent to "Coventry." In his Newport speech, Lord Salisbury said legislation against Boycotting was useless and absurd; and he (Mr. Shirley) could not help thinking that hon. Members opposite must regard that passage as an extremely awkward and inconvenient one. Boycotting was an unchristian and immoral practice no doubt, but it could exist just as much under a coercive as under a Constitutional system. There was no stronger evidence against coercion than the views of Mr. Knipe, the Ulster tenant farmer member of the Irish Land Commission. That gentleman, in his separate report, said that any attempt to meet agrarian crime and outrage by any fresh coercive legislation would now, as in the past, not only fail to secure tranquillity, but would inevitably end in seriously aggravating present difficulties. He added that the landlords, with a few honourable exceptions, had failed to make reductions of rent corresponding with the serious fall in prices, or to recognize the losses of tenants, and to this might be attributed combinations; and resistance to evictions; that if the power of the League were to be weakened and the people kept out of combinations it could only be by such legislation as would convince the poorest people that the law was their defender and friend. Mr. Knipe declared that it would be a serious mistake, while grievances were unredressed, to attempt, by fresh coercive legislation, to rob the people of their right of associating for the protection of their interests. They had heard a great deal about law and order in Ireland, and there could be no doubt that the maintenance of law and order was absolutely necessary in a civilized country; but the question was, would coercion secure the maintenance of law and order? He said, emphatically, No. It might possibly secure an appearance of law and order on the surface, but it would not do so in reality, and the effect would be to drive discontent below the surface, and to make the last condition of the country much worse than the first. The policy of the Government was, in its lack of foresight and statesmanship, like the policy of the ostrich which buried its head in the sand and congratulated itself on everything being right. He had the greatest possible respect for law and order, but he had a greater respect still for justice; and for a law to claim and to command the obedience of the governed, it must be a just law. There could, in his opinion, be no doubt that the only way to secure the supreme and final authority of the law in Ireland was to remove the terrible grievances under which the people suffered, to take care that no unjust rents should be enforced, and no unjust evictions executed. They should divest the laws of the foreign garb which they now wore in the eyes of the people, and invest them with a native character. But so far from the measure of the Government being likely to have any effect in that direction, he very much feared that its effect would be to make the maintenance of law and order in Ireland next to impossible. Another strong objection which he had to this Bill was its proposed permanence. It was not to be like previous measures of coercion, passed for a certain period, and then to expire; but the Government said this Bill was to be enforced for ever and ever. But he maintained that they had no right, in view of the Act of Union, to enforce permanent coercive legislation upon Ireland in opposition to the will of the majority of the nation. To do so was violating the principle of political equality, which was a fundamental condition of the Legislative Union. With regard to that very drastic clause of the Bill which gave summary power to two Resident Magistrates in Ireland to send men whom they might consider to be offenders to imprisonment for six months, with hard labour, he could not condemn it in too strong language. Considering the character and qualifications of the men who were Resident Magistrates in Ireland — the nominees of the landlords, and themselves violent partizans — it was nothing short of monstrous, and he must characterize in the same way the provision under which it was proposed to bring Irish prisoners over to England for trial. He had no doubt if they were brought over to England that they would have a fair trial, but that did not dispose of the objection. The question was what would be the effect upon the minds of the unlettered Irish peasantry, who regarded England as a foreign country? Would they not believe that their countrymen were being brought over to England, not in order that they might have a fair trial, but in order that they might be found guilty and put in prison? That might be a feeling to be deplored, but there was no use in our shutting our eyes to facts; and certainly a great deal was to be said for the feeling of the Irish peasantry in view of this unprecedented and deplorable proposal. He deeply deplored that the House should be called upon to spend its time in enacting a measure of that kind in this year of Jubilee—a year which, above all others, ought to be a year of unity, peace, and concord. What they wanted in such a year was the uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all the peoples of this great Empire, and it was because he believed that the measure of the Government would not have that beneficial and happy effect; but would, on the contrary, be the harbinger of untold evils, that he opposed it with all his power and with all his heart.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, that if the hon. Member who had just sat down wished for his Easter holiday, he was sure the House would give the hon. Member leave of absence, in order that he might "stump" the country. The Ministerialists did not complain of opposition to the Bill; they knew perfectly well that there would be opposition, and they were prepared to meet and overcome it, when the time came, as they overcame it with a large majority last week. The late Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) had remarked that this Bill would not cure the ills of Ireland. Doubtless, it would not do so, and he did not think the Government believed it would have that result; but the Bill would enable the Government to carry out those remedial measures on which they depended to promote order and contentment in Ireland. He would not dwell upon the specious arguments which had been advanced against the Bill. It had been said over and over again that the state of Ireland in respect to crime and disorder did not justify the introduction of this measure. All he could say on that point was that if it was true that there was such little crime in Ireland, and that the country was in such a peaceful condition as Gentlemen opposite would have them believe, the Bill would have no effect whatever. [*Ironical Home Rule cheers.*] It must be inoperative unless the crimes referred to existed, except on two suppositions—first, that the Irish magistrates were such diabolical characters that they would invent the crimes in order to put them down. [*Home Rule cheers.*] Would hon. Members opposite venture to make such an assertion as that? [*Home Rule cries of* "Yes!"] Then let those hon. Members get up in their places and substantiate the statement by giving the names of the magistrates who, they say, would do it. [*Cries of* "All of them!"] The second supposition was that when prisoners were brought over to England for trial they would be condemned by English juries, though not guilty. Did any hon. Member think that was probable? He could not believe either of these alternatives. He had heard the right hon. Gentleman the late Prime Minister use a great many words in speaking about crime in Ireland; but he had not heard him state distinctly that he did not consider there was a great amount of crime in Ireland. What, then, would be the effect of the Bill, and who would be the people affected by it? The rebellion in Ireland —for the agitation was nothing short of rebellion—was carried out in three ways, or by three means. First, there were the comparatively smaller crimes rife throughout the greater part of Ireland—Boycotting and the like. Those crimes were relatively small; yet, in their aggregate, they had a very serious effect. He could only compare them to the sting of a wasp. A single sting might not do much harm to a person; but if he was stung all over his body by a host of wasps the effect might be as serious to him as a fatal wound. Secondly, the agitation was carried on by the greater crimes, such as murder, Moonlighting, and firing into houses. It might be true that the number of such crimes had decreased as compared with 1881; still they were in exact inverse ratio to the success of the smaller crimes. If the smaller crimes did what was wanted, it was clear that the National League did not want the help of the larger crimes; but if the smaller crimes were not effective, those great crimes were held in terror over the heads and minds of the people, and this terror was the great machinery by which the rebellion was carried on. The third means of conducting the rebellion was the organization of the National League, which was simply the Land League under another name. It had the same look and the same smell, and was nothing else than a great conspiracy spread through Ireland. It was by that organization that the Irish agitators led the rebellion, and conspired to upset the connection between England and Ireland. Now, he thought the Bill introduced by the Government, which he insisted was not a Coercion Bill, but an anti-Coercion Bill, would cope with all those means of fomenting the rebellion. The senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) dismissed Boycotting lightly, saying that it was an old crime. But did it therefore cease to be a crime? The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) treated in a similar way an atrocious case of ill-treatment of girls. "Oh," said the right hon. Gentleman, "the Irish people were taught this crime 100 years ago." But did that make it less a crime? Considering the progress of education, the offence now had a darker complexion.

Would any hon. Member dare to say that crimes of this kind ought not to be put down? Then came this question—would anyone suffer in consequence of the suppression of such crimes. [*Cries of* "Yes!"] Would any among the hon. Members opposite suffer? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] He agreed with them in thinking that some among them would, but they would only suffer if guilty. The hon. Member who had just sat down said that Boycotting was practised in England, and reminded the House that he was once a schoolboy and that he was sent to "Coventry." He was not surprised to hear this confession from the hon. Member; but was it not absurd to compare such trifling practices with the Boycotting that occurred in Ireland? He would give the House an example of the length to which Boycotting was carried in that country. The case was taken from *The Kerry Evening Post* of January 29. [Mr. E. HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): It is a Conservative, an Orange journal.] He was glad to hear that because it justified him in crediting the story. It appeared that two Kerry men had served upon a jury by whom a number of men were convicted for the offence of Moonlighting. The word went forth that these two unfortunate men must be Boycotted, and the following notice was published:—

> "If you do not Boycott these tools of the Crown you will be coerced into doing so. Do it voluntarily, or severe measures will be taken against you. There are men who will not stick at a trifle to obtain revenge."

That was an example of the real coercion which was reducing Ireland to a condition of poverty and wretchedness. Ireland returned to Parliament 85 Nationalist Members and about 20 Conservative and Liberal Unionists. London returned about 50 Unionist Members and 10 or 12 Radicals. The Unionist representation for London, therefore, was nearly proportionate to the Nationalist representation for Ireland. Now, supposing that they in London should determine to Boycott all people who supplied Radical tradesmen with goods, what would be said by the hon. Member for Banbury (Sir Bernhard Samuelson) and those who shared his views? Why, that the grossest tyranny was being practised. Why should a system which would not be tolerated in London for a single week be permitted to flourish in Ireland? The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) was greatly incensed at the notion that his countrymen, when accused of crimes of the most serious kind, should be brought to this country for trial. At the same time, the hon. Member expressed complete confidence in the people and working classes of England. Why, then, should he object to the proposal that Irish criminals should be tried by people in whom he reposed that confidence? English juries were not prone to hang prisoners, and always leant to the side of mercy; but the hon. Member knew that they always gave verdicts in accordance with the evidence, and he feared for the safety of men whom, though they were steeped to the lips in blood, the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) and Separatists generally were not ashamed to use as instruments for the fulfilment of their political aims. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in Order in using that expression, and I must ask him to withdraw it.

MR. BARTLEY said, that if his language was out of Order he would certainly withdraw it. The Liberal Government proclaimed the Land League without special statutory powers; but the Government were obtaining powers by the Bill for the suppression of associations of this character. Hon. Members opposite knew that the Bill would strike at rebellion in Ireland. The National Party—the whole Separatist Party knew it. The Bill would secure a fair trial to the remedial measures in which alone the Government were interested. Could hon. Members opposite point to any measure which they had introduced which was calculated to promote the well-being of Ireland. [*Cries of* "Dozens!"] He hoped hon. Members would name at least one dozen. It was said that this was a Landlords Bill, and supported by the upper classes. It was nothing of the sort. He was not an Irish landlord, nor did he belong to the upper classes. He was not tarred with the Conservative brush; he had nothing to do with the Conservatives. [*A laugh.*] He meant he had nothing to do with the aristocratic line. It was always said that the Conservatives were aristocratic. Well, he was not. His worst enemies had never accused him of that. But all the landlords together had never done the mischief in the country which the National League and the Land League had done, But the Bill would stop all that, and would tend to the well-being of the country, would promote industry, and encourage enterprize, trade, better means of communication, such as tramways, &c., and tend to make Ireland peaceful and prosperous. If they had a Parliament in every city in Ireland, the country would be none the richer or more prosperous. It was because the Government and their supporters desire to bring Ireland into a condition which would encourage enterprise and attract capital that they asked the House to accept this measure; but unless law, order, and liberty were in the first instance re-established, it was his opinion that it would be next to useless attempting anything of an ameliorative character.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.) said, he believed that the hon. Member who had just sat down had to his constituents advocated equal rights, equal powers, and equal laws for Ireland and England. How, then, would the hon. Member's constituents receive such a speech as he had just delivered? He did not believe the hon. Member was a typical Englishman. If he thought so he should despair of a settlement between the two countries. He believed, however, that the hon. Member's fellow-countrymen would repudiate his ideas. The position of the Government was unique. The demand for a Coercion Bill was generally supported by statistics which, of course, were supplied by Dublin Castle. But there was absolutely a decrease of crime in 1886 as compared with 1885, when the Tory Government deliberately abstained from asking for exceptional powers. But in 1885 it was necessary for the Tories to seek aid from the Irish Party in view of the coming General Election. There was also a diminution of crime in the second half of 1886, when the number of offences was 472, as compared with the first half, when the number was 553. The only argument, therefore, which was left to the Government was the miserable *tu quoque* that the Liberal Governments in the past had done the same. But if Liberal Governments had done wrong in times past, that was no reason for the Conservatives to do wrong now. Statistics proved that crime did not exist in Ireland, and he believed the object of this Coercion Bill was to grapple with the National organization which had done so much for the country. The position of to-day was of the Government's own making; they had rejected the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork, which would have alleviated the misery of the winter and spring. He agreed that law and order were the essential basis of all stable States; but if hon. Members desired to make the laws respected, the first thing they should do was to make those laws worthy of respect and bring them into harmony with the views of the majority of the people. When the Irish had a Parliament of their own they would pass such laws, and enforce them with an iron hand if necessary. They were asked to influence the Irish people to observe laws which were in direct opposition to the opinions which the Irish Party hold. So long as Parliament insisted upon passing laws antagonistic to Irish feeling, so long would there be a difficulty in working them. The Irish National League had been accused of fomenting disorder and crime; but the fact was that, through its instrumentality, many disagreements between landlord and tenant had been amicably settled, and bloodshed and disorder had been averted. Those who brought charges against the National League derived their information from untrustworthy sources, especially from the London Press, which seized every opportunity of maligning Ireland and of endeavouring to fan up that spirit of hatred between the two peoples which it should be the object of journalists and public men to allay and calm. As for the Plan of Campaign, it had only endeavoured to make unreasonable men do that which their reasonable brethren all over the country were doing, and it had succeeded in bringing many a bully to his knees. They knew from experience that this legislation would not be used for the purpose of punishing criminals, but for hunting down political opponents. History, he contended, showed that these Coercion Acts increased crime instead of decreasing it; this would be the effect of the present Bill, and whilst so far from crushing it, would only purify and strengthen the national spirit. He and his Friends were agitators because they could not gain a hearing for Irish grievances except by agitation; but at least they were open agitators, and if they were suppressed the secret conspiracy of desperate men would be substituted for their open and Constitutional agitation. He knew that hon. Members opposite desired to sever the connection between the Irish priesthood and the National organization; but he could tell those hon. Members that the Irish priests exercised a most conservative influence on the people. The Tory Party had said at the time when Earl Spencer was in favour of coercion that no man was better qualified by experience to speak on such a subject; but now, when he had enlarged his experience and had altered his views, hon. Members disregarded his opinion. It was not with any feeling of satisfaction that he was unable to speak respectfully of the administration of the law in Ireland, or of those who administered it. Judges in Ireland were almost invariably raised to the Bench on account of their political views, and on account of the hatred they bore to the Irish people; and they permitted those views to bias their judgment on the Bench. He regretted to think that the voice of an Irish Member did not carry much weight in that House. He thought it a mockery of Constitutional Government that the opinions of duly elected Representatives should be ignored. Irish Members had felt it to be their duty to lay their case to the best of their ability before the House, and they having done so, the responsibility of dealing with the matter would now rest upon Parliament.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir EDWARD CLARKE) (Plymouth): The challenge which has been thrown down to the Government by the Amendment placed upon the Paper, and now before the House, is a perfectly fair and distinct challenge, and if the proposition contained in it is established, most undoubtedly the House of Commons ought not to accept the second reading of this Bill. I think, however, that the speeches which we have listened to during the evening show that the House and the country have gained a great deal of useful information upon this question during the 15 nights' debate which we have had upon Irish matters. There is no longer any doubt that there are mischiefs in existence in Ireland which require to be promptly dealt with. There is, for instance, no longer any attempt to deny that the judicial system of the country has completely broken down; and that it has broken down on the one hand, from the inability of getting witnesses to come forward and give testimony; and, on the other hand, from the difficulty of finding jurors of spirit and courage enough to do their duty. From these two causes the judicial system of Ireland has completely broken down. Nor is there, nor can there be, any longer any question of the existence in Ireland, apart from, and far beyond the mischief I have just indicated, of other mischiefs which have been proved by evidence the most conclusive that has ever been laid before the House of Commons. There is evidence that there are mischiefs existing in Ireland, widespread in their operation, and very deep and serious in their effects, which must be dealt with if we are to have any hope of restoring prosperity and peace in Ireland. In my opinion, the prosperity and the peace of Ireland are objects which are as dear to the hearts of many of those who sit upon this side of the House as they are to the hearts of the most ardent Nationalists. It has been said, within the last few days, that the Government have been forced into bringing forward this Bill by the influence of the Liberal Unionists, or by the more noisy Members of their own Party, or by the influence of a panic-stricken and violent Press. Sir, there is not a fragment of truth in any one of those assertions. I am quite willing to allow that there has been, on the part of the Leaders of the Conservative Party, a great reluctance to admit that the experiment which they hopefully made of dealing with Ireland by the ordinary law has not been a success; but they believe that the failure of that attempt has not been due to any want of resolution or of industry on their part. They have striven, on the one hand, to enforce the law with care and caution; and, on the other hand, to enforce the law with firmness and with strength. But there have been influences at work in Ireland of great and powerful efficacy, and which are in operation now, which have, to a great extent, defeated their action, and would be fatal to all government in that country, unless they can be checked and put an end to. Those influences—those illegitimate influences — are using the undoubtedly real sufferings and troubles of the Irish people as an excuse for agitation, and as a weapon with which they may obtain Nationalist objects; and it is with those influences that the Government desire to cope by bringing this Bill into operation in Ireland. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] I am very glad that my definition of the issue which is raised between us is accepted by both sides of the House. We have never doubted that there has existed in Ireland for the last few years, and that there does now exist in that country, a great deal of real suffering and distress, which it will require the exertions of Parliament to deal with, and, to some extent, to assuage; but we also believe that, where there has been real distress and trouble, there are those in Ireland who, so far from making any effort to relieve that distress and to remove that trouble, would rather keep them in existence and aggravate them, in order to have the opportunity of using them as means for forwarding schemes which are dangerous to the Empire itself. Now, Sir, I said that there was no longer any question of the existence in Ireland of serious mischiefs with which it is necessary that the Government should deal. I am entitled to say that, after the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the late Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell), who has spoken in the course of this debate, and who made, I think, the ablest speech which has been made on this matter from the Front Bench. It was a speech which was remarkable for its moderation and caution in regard to the statements which it contained, and it was one which was statesmanlike in its character. But what did that speech come to? It was in itself a series of admissions on his part that there are in Ireland grave and serious mischiefs to be dealt with, and the mischiefs which he admitted, as he went on, are the very mischiefs against which the principal provisions of this Bill are directed; but, from the beginning to the end of that speech, it contained no single suggestion as to the steps which should be taken, or the provisions which should be adopted, to meet those mischiefs which would be more fitting than the proposal of Her Majesty's Government. Let us see what his suggestions come to. He spoke, in the first place, of the difficulty of getting witnesses to give evidence in Irish Courts of Justice, and he attributed that difficulty to a cause which is somewhat remarkable. He suggested that it is greatly owing to the fact that sympathy is felt for those who have broken the law. I can quite understand people who are outside reading in the newspapers of the break-down of the law, and feeling sympathy for those who have broken it; but when you are dealing with a case of personal outrage and actual injury—when a man has been forced upon his knees, and shot in the legs, it seems a curious thing to suggest as the reason why that man, his friends, his neighbours, and his family do not come forward to give evidence, is that they are out of sympathy with the law. There must be a deeper and a stronger reason than that, and that deeper and stronger reason is found in notorious cases such as these and others which have happened in Ireland—in the fact that those who have come forward to give evidence in a Court of Justice have been Boycotted afterwards. They have found themselves cut off from all the ordinary associations and comforts of their life, from any sort of enjoyment with those among whom they live, and even from carrying on the work by which they live, or of obtaining the means for their subsistence. An hon. Member the other day actually suggested that the reason why the Curtin family was Boycotted was not because of a possible sympathy with the attack made upon them, but because after the attack had been made, the members of the family had given evidence against the perpetrators of the crime. This my hon. and learned Friend admits is a serious mischief, with which we ought to deal. But when he comes to the remedy proposed in this Bill for that mischief, what does my hon. and learned Friend say? He says—as I should say—that the plan proposed by the Bill of having inquiries where an offence or crime has been committed, although no person is in custody for that crime, is a proposal he should be glad to see incorporated in any Bill for the reform of the Criminal Law of this country. I believe it to be a sound and good provision of itself, and one which we ought promptly to adopt in dealing with the difficulties of Ireland. That proposal was put forward in a Bill for this country with reference to any special case of emergency when the late Government proposed the adoption of a Criminal Code. The proposal of the late Government with respect to England was sent up to be considered by a Grand Committee, and was most willingly assented to by those sitting on this side of the House, who were Members of that Grand Committee. That very clause is what the Government now ask the House to adopt, in order to get rid of the difficulty in regard to procuring the evidence of witnesses in Ireland. Let me pass to the second difficulty. My hon. and learned Friend admits that there is a difficulty in getting convictions in Ireland—that is to say, he admits that there have been cases in which juries have been untrue to their oaths, and in which they have found verdicts of not guilty on evidence that to all appearance was perfectly clear against the accused. Does the observation which my hon. and learned Friend made upon that excuse us from the necessity of trying to find a remedy? I do not stop to consider what truth there is in the observation, as it is for the moment irrelevant to the point I am upon. He says there has been disaffection and distrust created in Ireland of the jury system by the systematic packing of juries, and he was impartial enough to say that that jury packing has been practised by both sides. Be it so; let us admit it for the moment. What is this but another element of weakness in the jury system in Ireland? The effect of the course pursued by Governments for years past in setting up this dangerous jury system in Ireland has been that, instead of the 12 men entering the jury-box prepared to discuss and consider the evidence and to decide according to their oaths, jurymen have got a belief that they are partizans on one side or the other, sent to find a verdict of innocent or guilty, as the case may be. My hon. and learned Friend has not answered the suggestion that some amendment of the law is required to counteract this state of things. Let me strengthen that reason by another cogent reason. The gravest matter of all in connection with the break-down of the jury system in Ireland is that, in a great measure, it has been brought about by the influence of terrorism upon jurors. [*Cries of* "Jury packing!"] I have dealt with jury packing. It is past controversy that in Irelend there has been an attempt to coerce juries partly by holding meetings, and by exhortations in the papers before juries were called upon to go into the jury-box, and partly by that vile insertion in the Irish newspapers of the names of the members of the jury who said they voted for an acquittal, so that people might be able to refer to the jury panel and mark down the names for popular hatred and vengeance of those who had not assured the writer in the newspaper that they had voted for an acquittal. I was glad to hear my hon. and learned Friend speak in terms of manly and indignant eloquence of paragraphs like that being inserted in the newspapers. I am glad, indeed, that he spoke those words. But I greatly fear that the words of my hon. and learned Friend, eloquent and courageous as they were, will have but little effect in Ireland. There are other steps then which must be taken in regard to Ireland. It is clear that the system of trial by jury has broken down there in some way or other, and that we must supplement the system of trial by jury by a system of summary jurisdiction which will bring prompt, if but small, punishment for a good many serious crimes, and it is a very grave question for the House and for the country to consider whether, in regard to the more serious crimes which are dealt with by the jury system, it is not necessary to adopt some such a plan as the removal, in certain cases, of the trials to this country, in order to secure impartial trials and justice. It is all very well to make objection to any specific proposal for dealing with the difficulty that exists; but that difficulty is not to be got rid of by dismissing successively every suggestion that may be made for providing a remedy. At the present time, a great deal of most serious mischief exists in Ireland, and it is mischief that can only be dealt with as the law now stands, by means of trial by jury. At the present time, trial by jury has substantially broken down in regard to a large class of cases in Ireland. ["No, no!"] It has broken down through the acts of those who have set themselves publicly to coerce and terrify jurors. [*Cries of* "Where?"] More than once, in the course of this debate, evidence on this subject has been read. During the last two or three weeks it has been proved by the charges of the

Judges. The charges of the Judges are undoubtedly statements of very serious importance. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was in Office, and when he and his Colleagues had to support a Bill of a far more stringent kind than that which the Government now propose, they quoted the charges of the Judges, and thought that in those charges they had sufficient justification for the measure they were proposing to Parliament. But what is the answer now, when the charges of the Judges are quoted? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian says that if one of those Judges had expressed an opinion upon some particular case which came before him—a case, I presume, in which there had been sufficient evidence to convict—that that would be of importance; but the right hon. Gentleman says, further, that when the Judge, with all the responsibility of his position, and of his public duty, makes statements with respect to the condition of crime in the district with which he is dealing, that is to be treated as a sort of speculative series of observations which he was not called upon to make, and that, therefore, no attention should be paid to them. We had an odd illustration of the way in which the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) deals with such questions, for he referred to the fact that my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General quoted the charges of four Judges; but "there are 21 Judges in Ireland," said the hon. Member, "and where are the other 17?" That observation for the moment made a great impression upon the House. Now, as a matter of fact, there are only nine Judges who go on Circuit. The 21 Judges include the Judges of the other Courts, who have nothing whatever to do with going on Circuit, or with the administration of the Criminal Law. But of the nine Judges who go on Circuit, the charges of four were referred to by the Attorney General in support of his argument. Well, then, let me ask, upon what ground could the Government more properly go, than upon the ground of statements made by those Judges in these circumstances, and with their knowledge of the state of the country? Hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, with a very obvious object, say—"Bring your specific cases, and let us quarrel over them." I quite see the object of desiring to have laid before the House what would really be a mass of unintelligible details, and the discussion of the separate and several cases would be the discussion of a mass of unintelligible details. One can see the object of hon. Members in endeavouring to get the House to lose itself in an utterly hopeless attempt to deal with 40, or 50, or 60 criminal cases one by one. The House of Commons has very much better means of knowledge than that—very much better means of knowledge in the opinions of the Judges, who have brought a judicial training to bear on the facts, and have spoken with the responsibility of their position, and in whose judgment with regard to the character of the crimes in the district in which they are travelling and holding Assizes the House of Commons places confidence, and wisely and rightly places confidence. I pass on to the third subject with which my hon. and learned Friend to some extent dealt, and that was the matter of Boycotting. Of course, we have heard a great deal of discussion with regard to Boycotting, and the extent of Boycotting in Ireland. Here, again, is an illustration of the way in which the House of Commons must deal with questions which involve very much detail and a very large mass of evidence. The Blue Book produced by the Royal Commission contains an enormous amount of evidence and many thousands of answers; and when it is dealt with, picking out here and there certain answers supposed to prove a particular conclusion, when the evidence of witnesses is handled as the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller was most unfairly handled by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, the House of Commons might spend weeks and months in dealing with answers, or a selection of answers, contained in this Blue Book with regard to Boycotting, intending to prove a particular proposition. What resource has the House of Commons in the matter? It is to hear what the Commissioners themselves say. I hear a great deal of talk about the composition of the Commission. There was one Commissioner whose name used to be quoted with the greatest possible respect and admiration by hon. Members opposite so long as his letters in the newspapers were supposed to assist the contention they were making. That was Sir James Caird. He was one of the Royal Commissioners; and instead of casting up and down the pages of this great Blue Book to get an answer here and there, and bringing them together in order to produce a definite result, will not the House of Commons be justified in taking the conclusions at which the Commissioners arrived with regard to the prevalence of Boycotting in Ireland? We hear, in euphemistic language, of "exclusive dealing;" but the Commissioners describe it in language which apparently sums up the evidence. That language has been quoted before; but it is so much to the purpose that I will venture to read it again to the House. It is said that Boycotting is now altogether dissociated from outrage and crime—that there is no crime and outrage, and that Boycotting, therefore, has become inoffensive. It is as true now as it was when the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian first said that the ultimate sanction of Boycotting is murder. Boycotting is now installed as a system in Ireland, as the records in the Irish newspapers and accounts from different parts of the country show; and as at first it was established by the dread sanction of murder, so now it is supported by the sanction of outrage and crime. The Commissioners say—

> "Outrage was at first made use of to intimidate parties who were willing to pay rents; but latterly the methods of passing resolutions at National League meetings, causing their proceedings to be reported in local newspapers, naming obnoxious men and then Boycotting those named, have been adopted. Tenants who have paid even the judicial rents have been summoned to appear before self-constituted tribunals, and if they failed to do so, or, appearing, failed to satisfy those tribunals, have been fined or Boycotted. The people are more afraid of Boycotting, which depends for its success on the probability of outrage, than they are of the judgments of the Courts of Justice. This unwritten law in some districts is supreme. We deem it right to call attention to the terrible ordeal that a Boycotted person has to undergo, which was by several witnesses practically described during the progress of our inquiry. The existence of a Boycotted person becomes a burden to him, as none in town or village are allowed, under a similar penalty to themselves, to supply him or his family with the necessaries of life. He is not allowed to dispose of the produce of his farm. Instances have been brought before us in which his attendance at Divine Service was prohibited, in which his cattle have been, some killed, some barbarously mutilated; in which all his servants and labourers were ordered and obliged to leave him; in which the most ordinary necessaries of life, and even medical comforts, had to be procured from long distances; in which no one would attend the funeral of, or dig a grave for, a member of a Boycotted person's family; and in which his children have been forced to discontinue attendance at the national school of the district. Had we thought it necessary for the purpose of our inquiry, we could have taken a much larger amount of evidence to prove the existence of severe Boycotting in very many districts. We did not, however, think it necessary to examine more than a sufficient number of witnesses to inform ourselves, and to illustrate the cruel severity with which the decrees of local self-constituted tribunals are capable of being, and are actually, enforced."

Better, far better, than any words and extracts quoted by hon. Members from the evidence in the Blue Book—better, far better, is that account given by the responsible Members of the Commission of the results of the evidence which, with so much pains, they had taken. But I should like to say a word with regard to the very curious fact that hon. Members on the other side, whenever this Blue Book is referred to, have acquired the habit of calling out "Buller, Buller!"—[An hon. MEMBER: Knipe!]—as if Sir Redvers Buller was the witness whose evidence they were entitled to refer to in justification of the National League, and in refutation of the statements that have been made from this side. I suppose the only possible explanation is that they have not read Sir Redvers Buller's evidence for themselves. I believe they must have trusted to the account given by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian of that evidence; and they have been deceived with the belief that Sir Redvers Buller gave evidence which practically exonerated the National League. My hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) gave some extracts from Sir Redvers Buller's evidence the other day. When hon. Members opposite adopt Sir Redvers Buller as their witness, and refer to his evidence on various questions raised in connection with his mission, surely they must have forgotten the evidence he gave in regard to the part of Ireland to which he was sent. Now, at the beginning of his evidence Sir Redvers Buller says—

> "I speak only for Kerry, Clare, and part of Cork; and in respect to those counties I think there is, in certain localities, an organized stand against the payment of existing rents; but that rent generally is being well paid.—Do you think that the improved state of the country, as far as the payment of rent is concerned, comes

from the fact that the power of the League is decreasing, or is it because the League has given orders that rents are to be paid if reductions are offered?—No, I do not think so; I think the League would, if they could, prevent the payment of rent, and are now endeavouring to their utmost to prevent rents being paid; but the improvement in the payment of rents is because the tenants are getting reasonable allowances.—Therefore, in spite of the opposition of the League, they are willing to pay?—I believe that the great majority of tenants throughout those counties—that is, the majority of those who have not paid—are anxious to pay.—Are anxious to pay?—Yes; are anxious to pay.—Where they get reasonable allowances?—Yes; where they get reasonable allowances.—They must have reasonable allowances. That is a condition?—Not exactly. When I say that the great majority are anxious to pay, there are a great many men who do not require an allowance at all, and who would pay if they dared.—They are still in fear of the League?—They are coerced, and in fear of the intimidation that is rampant in this country."

Now, Sir, it is impossible—[*Cries of* "Read on!" *from the Home Rule Benches.*]—I have read a passage from Sir Redvers Buller's evidence, which shows, as clearly as anything can possibly show, that to his knowledge, in those counties for the peace of which he was responsible, there was coercion rampant—coercion which intimidated men who were able to pay, and were willing to pay, not requiring any allowance at all, but who were afraid to pay because of the coercion exercised by the League. Now, in the face of these three matters, surely something must be done by the Government with respect to Ireland. If it is not possible to get witnesses to give evidence because of the terrorism and influence of Boycotting; if it is not possible to get jurors to do their duty steadfastly because of the terrible danger which a man runs if he does his duty; if it is impossible to get freedom of action on the part of tenants who are willing and able to pay, but who dare not, surely the Government must step in and do something to remedy such a state of things. The only question is what the course of the Government should be. All the speeches which have been heard in support of the Amendment are speeches which go directly towards the advocacy before the House of that which is the only alternative suggested to the Bill of the Government. There is manifest unfairness in the alternative which hon. Gentlemen opposite are so fond of putting with regard to the action of the Government as compared with the action proposed by the other side. They say it is a question between coercion on one side and conciliation on the other. They say that that issue was not put before the country at the last General Election; and they say that, as it was not put before the country, they are entitled to use every means that Parliamentary practice has placed in their hands in order to delay and obstruct the progress of the Bill. Let us just see how the matter stands. To describe it as a choice between coercion and conciliation is an entire mistake and misrepresentation. There is coercion in Ireland, as Sir Redvers Buller has proved, and as the Commission has shown; and against that coercion it is that the Government intend to make, by the help of this Bill when it is passed, a firm and resolute stand. But what is the other alternative? It is not conciliation; it is surrender. It is surrender to the intimidation which pursues witnesses when they come out of the witness-box, which makes jurors afraid to exercise their rights and to do their duty in the jury-box, and which intimidation, as I have shown by the passages I have read, even from the mouth of a witness supposed to be favourable to the other side, is proved to be rampant in different parts of the country. And was not this issue put before the country at the last Election? Distinctly it was put very plainly before the country. The cry with which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian went to the country in the middle of last year was that very cry. It was he and his followers who declared that the choice before the country was between what they called conciliation and what they called coercion; and there was no mistake or hesitation as to the line which the Conservative Party took on that question in that Election last year. I venture to say that there was no man who stood as a Conservative candidate before one of the constituencies who, while saying that it was still hoped that a firm administration of the ordinary law would be able to repress those influences of mischief which were disturbing and demoralizing the life of Ireland—there was not one who did not go on to say further that, by some means or other, order must be restored in Ireland, and the observance of contracts, and the observance of social rights, must be enforced; and it was a firm and resolute government in Ireland that the country accepted and supported at the Election which then took place. Well, now, what is the choice? I say that it is the adoption of remedial measures on the one hand, and an absolute surrender to the forces of disorder on the other; and when I speak of remedial measures, I repudiate altogether the distinction between this Bill and the Bills which refer to the Land Question. They are all remedial measures. Without a Bill which shall relieve the tenants, whose deplorable cases I have read, from the coercion which is now exercised upon them — without some measure which shall break down the tyranny which now holds them in thrall, it is impossible to get a free experience of any measure dealing with the question of land. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian found that to be the case in 1881. It was all very well for my hon. and learned Friend (Sir Charles Russell) to say that hon. Members below the Gangway supported and endeavoured to enlarge the scope of the Land Bill of 1881. Sir, when that Bill was passed they endeavoured to defeat its operation. ["No, no!"] Yes; the influence of the popular Leaders in Ireland was used to keep the tenants out of the Land Courts—["No, no!"] —and to restrain them from submitting themselves to the influence of the Land Courts; and it was not until the right hon. Gentleman had sent his chief ally of to-day to Kilmainham Gaol that the Land Act of 1881 was allowed to have a fair and free trial. At the present time there is an instance of precisely the same course of conduct on the part of the Leaders of the National Party in Ireland. It was confessed in this House not long ago by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) that it was not possible to imagine a scheme of land purchase more favourable in its arrangements to the tenants than that which is connected with the name of Lord Ashbourne, and which is now in operation in Ireland. What is the attitude of the Nationalist Leaders with regard to that measure? So far from assisting in furthering the object of that Bill, so far from endeavouring to help in that process which they have always declared to be the chief and best remedy for all the disorders of Ireland—namely, the transforming of the tenants of Ireland into proprietors of the land, they are now doing all they can by speech, by advice, and by warning, to prevent the tenants from taking advantage of Lord Ashbourne's Act and becoming the proprietors of their farms; and if a Bill were to be passed by the present Government for dealing with such matters, either with regard to the alteration of the Land Act, or to the extension of the terms of purchase, it would be impossible for it to have free scope and effect as a remedy for Irish troubles, unless this Bill were passed and we were able to set the people free. I was very sorry to hear one passage in the speech of my hon. and learned Friend —a passage which I confess, I think, disfigured that speech — in which he spoke in terms of criticism of the Bill now introduced in "another place," and which deals with the question of leaseholders and also with certain questions in the mode of eviction of tenants. He alluded to the proposal made to do away with the necessity that the tenant who was in default in regard to his rent should be evicted by force from his house, and turned out with his family. Having been turned out of the holding, he may then be re-admitted as caretaker. He alluded to the proposal that, instead of that proceeding, a notice should be sent to the tenant which would do away altogether with the necessity of eviction. [*A laugh.*] I quite understand the object of hon. Members opposite in this matter. Now, we all know that the effect of a provision of that kind would be to get rid of a good many of the present scenes of trouble and disorder; and because it would put an end to those scenes which are now quoted as an excuse for the agitation conducted by hon. Members below the Gangway — for that very reason, they desire that these scenes of disorder shall continue. [An hon. MEMBER: It is all a sham.] They would rather, when a tenant is two or three years in default in his rent, that the landlord should be obliged to go down and turn the tenant out on the highway, and evict him and his family, for the very reason that such a proceeding is likely to produce scenes of disorder and tumult. My hon. and learned Friend attacked that provision of the Bill because he said it was in the interest of the landlord, and so he associated himself, I am sorry to say, in that one passage of his speech with that which has been the course of conduct of the Nationalist Leaders in Ireland for years past—namely, a desire to keep grievances alive and to secure a recurrence of those hardships by making speeches by which they assert their influence and authority. Now, Sir, it is clear that something must be done with regard to the question of Ireland, and the Government propose these remedial measures in strict conformity with the declaration and the pledges which the Members of this Party made before the country in the middle of last year. What is the alternative? The alternative is not the suggestion of a different Bill from this to deal with the question of Criminal Law in Ireland, or the suggestion to meet this mischief by any other such measures; but the alternative is to disregard altogether the decision of the country at the last General Election, and to proceed to enter upon a discussion whether or not the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian is to be allowed to deal in his own fashion with the question of Irish self-government. Let me point out to the House what would be the consequence of entering upon such a discussion? It is, I think, agreed that the agrarian question—the question of land purchase—is at the root of the real trouble in Ireland. Of course, it does not cover the whole area of the trouble; but it does deal directly with agrarian questions in Ireland. Hon. Members below the Gangway know perfectly well that if the agrarian question could be satisfactorily dealt with, a great deal of their occupation in the Nationalist agitation would be gone. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian made an after-dinner speech a little while ago, which occupied two columns and a quarter of the newspapers, and a good many people searched diligently down those two dreary columns to see whether there was anything for which that speech was made, and it turned out that there was one sentence which was probably the reason of its delivery; and that was the declaration that while, on the one hand, the right hon. Gentleman believed that means could be found for dealing with the Land Purchase Question in Ireland without trenching upon the resources or endangering the credit of this country, the first condition necessary for that was the establishment of a certain system of government in Ireland, and unless that system were established in Ireland he could not take a single step towards the solution of the Land Question. Now, Sir, what prospect is this which the right hon. Gentleman offers to the House of Commons? No declaration in favour of the right hon. Gentleman's policy of Home Rule for Ireland can be got from the present House of Commons. The only way in which the most ardent supporter of the right hon. Gentleman can imagine that it can be got is, by making the work of the House of Commons impossible, and his only hope can be that by harassing and impeding the Government it may eventually become necessary to appeal again to the constituencies. Why, Sir, the Liberal Party, or rather one section of the Liberal Party, under the Leadership of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, have positively adopted the programme which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) denounced so vigorously in 1881. On the 11th of March in that year the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was making an attack upon the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), and he said—

"The hon. Member for Tipperary"—

the hon. Member for East Mayo sat for Tipperary then—

"the hon. Member for Tipperary said that the Land League had three objects in view—first, to paralyze the Government; secondly, to obstruct Parliament; and, thirdly, to supersede the action of the law."

The hon. Member for East Mayo has not changed his objects one whit. He still holds the same views, and he would be the last man to suggest that he has altered his objects since 1881. What he desired to do in 1881—namely, to paralyze the Government, to obstruct Parliament, and to supersede the action and authority of the law, he is trying to do now. But now he is no longer denounced by the right hon. Member for Derby, and the only change is that he now has the right hon. Gentleman as an active accomplice. These words exactly describe the action which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian is now taking. He desires to put himself in a position to paralyze the Government—knowing that he can do nothing himself—because he is in a minority in the House of Commons. He desires to hamper and prevent the Government from giving effect to the judgment pronounced by the country at the last Election. He wishes to obstruct the action of Parliament, and to give encouragement to his allies below the Gangway to enter upon what he terms "sporadic discussion" that may paralyze the action of Parliament, and during that interval the whole time of this House is to be spent in continual discussion, the real object being that the authority which has established itself in Ireland may have time to strengthen its hold on that country, and strike its roots deeper, and make its laws more closely and unhesitatingly obeyed. As time goes on, if the House of Commons is unwise enough to embark afresh upon a discussion of the right hon. Gentleman's Home Rule scheme, we might find, before we reached the end of that discussion, that the present mischief in Ireland, which is universally admitted, had become absolutely incurable. But supposing that it were possible that the right hon. Gentleman could carry out his mischievous design—supposing that he could paralyze the Government, and make it impossible for the House of Commons to do its work, and compel an appeal to the country, does anyone think that the result would be to bring that section of the Liberal Party back to power — [An hon. MEMBER: Try it.]—independently of the support of hon. Gentlemen from Ireland below the Gangway? Sir, in 1885, the right hon. Gentleman, who knew perfectly well how keen and severe are the temptations of political life, warned the country against exposing the Liberal Party to so terrible a temptation as that of being placed in a position which would compel them to rely for retaining Office on the support of hon. Members below the Gangway. He solemnly assured the House that, much as he trusted the Liberal Party, he did not think it ought to be trusted if it were in Office by the support of the Irish Party, and were liable to be told by them the very day after they came into Office—"If you do not do this, or if you do not leave that undone, we will turn you out." He saw the danger; but the temptation was too strong for him, and in those fatal days at the beginning of last year he bartered away all the convictions he had publicly declared, and his future political freedom.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Sir, I rise to Order. I wish to ask you if it is in Order to discuss the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian at the Election of 1885 upon a Motion for the second reading of the Crimes Bill?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have heard nothing from the hon. and learned Gentleman which is out of Order.

SIR EDWARD CLARKE: The right hon. Gentleman, I say, bartered all the convictions he has avowed and his future freedom for the sake of coming into Office under conditions the danger of which he had recognized in 1885, and which he illustrated in 1886. There is no reasonable man in this House who, looking at the condition of political parties, or the prospects of political life, can suppose that any circumstance can happen which, at any Election, would result in putting the right hon. Gentleman in power, irrespective of the vote of his allies below the Gangway or the other side of the House, and against such a danger as he has himself illustrated the country ought to protect the right hon. Gentleman. The duty of this Government, having received the mandate of the country, is to carry it out with all diligence, and to address itself to the necessary and useful work that requires to be done. The task of dealing with disorder in Ireland is the first to which the Government must address itself. But we cannot help remembering that there are many other subjects with which Parliament has to deal. There are Bills now waiting to come before this House, which have passed the other House of Parliament, dealing with matters of serious importance to the people of this country; and those who are entering on the plan of obstructing and delaying—for they cannot defeat the progress of these Bills—will have to reckon with the country, which will soon find out that the only result of that unjustifiable obstruction has been to increase the difficulty of establishing law in Ireland, and to delay the progress of measures of great value to the people of this country.

DR. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.): I cannot help congratulating the hon and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General upon the speech he has made on the subject of this Coercion Bill. I am glad that he has had the manliness to place the whole case on its proper basis. He has told us, and we are much obliged to him, that the object of this Bill is to suppress the National League. He did not tell us that in so many words; but, by a paraphrase, we all understood he told us unmistakably that the object of the Bill is to suppress the National League. He also admitted with candour and manliness that it is a Coercion Bill, and a Coercion Bill as extreme in its provisions as any which has hitherto been proposed to Parliament; but he boldly said that it was a remedial measure. We will not quarrel about terms. He may call it a remedial measure, with the palliative admission that it is a Coercion Bill; but I do not think that that qualification will be at all calculated to conciliate the Opposition, or to satisfy them that it is anything more than a misuse of terms. The hon. and learned Gentleman admits that there has been no attempt to conciliate public opinion in Ireland; that this Bill is not an attempt at conciliation, but that it is simple and naked coercion. He may call it a remedial measure if he likes; but he never addressed a single argument to the real question before the House. He has gone over the old Tory ground; he has indulged in vituperation of hon. Members below the Gangway on this side of the House. It is very easy to make imputations such as he and other hon. Members have indulged in; but he has not brought forward one single tittle of evidence in support of his vituperation. He has been quite as barren of argument in that respect as any of the hon. Gentlemen who have preceded him on that side of the House. There is only one way, Sir, of arguing with people who make broad imputations which are incapable of proof, and of which not one particle of proof has been offered by the hon. and learned Member or by anybody else; and that is to despise the imputations, and to scorn the persons who make them. I can assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that we entertain the utmost possible contempt for these imputations; and for those who make them we have the utmost possible scorn. We believe that the people of this country, as well as of Ireland, will join us before long in this scorn and contempt. And now let me come to the main question before the House. The hon. and learned Gentleman never addressed a single argument from the beginning to the end of his speech which was not mere clap-trap. I believe that that is not altogether an un-Parliamentary expression; but I maintain that the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman was the merest "clap-trap" and fustian, and it is not worth while to take further notice of it. The hon. and learned Gentleman admits one fact in which we all agree—namely, that things are not altogether as they ought to be in Ireland; that there is a great deal of disorganization there, a great amount of poverty, and that something must be done in order to remove that disorganization, and apply a palliative remedy to the poverty which now exists. Upon that point we are agreed; but the only remedy the hon. and learned Gentleman has for it is coercion pure and simple. He follows in the wake of so many other hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who have gone before him, and he simply tells us—"Shut your eyes and open your mouths, and see what you are going to receive." We are to receive some wonderful boon from the Government if we will only allow our hands to be tied and our mouths to be gagged, but what that boon is going to be beyond the Bill now before "another place" he does not offer us the smallest hint. This Bill is called a "Bill for the Prevention and Punishment of Crime in Ireland." The Amendment which has been proposed says that instead of preventing crime the Bill will increase it. To every word of the Amendment I fully agree; and, so far as the Bill itself is concerned, I conceive that every clause contained in it is wrong in principle, and will be mischievous in operation; nor do I think that the Bill itself, if it becomes law, will conduce to the prevention or the punishment of crime. Instead of insinuating charges he cannot prove against hon. Gentlemen, the least of whom is as honourable as he is, it would have been better if the hon. and learned Gentleman had dealt with the plain, simple facts before the House, and had given something like argument in support of his side of the case. Let us see how the matter works out. This is a Bill for the prevention and punishment of crime; and it is said that crime is not prevented in Ireland because of two things—the difficulty of getting evidence, and the difficulty of obtaining a conviction. Now, to begin with, there ought to be some little evidence to show that there is an abnormal state of crime in Ireland. The hon. and learned Gentleman avoided that point. No doubt he remembered how ignominiously the Chief Secretary broke down when he attempted to make out a case, and he would also remember how my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) afterwards said, pulverized the arguments by which the Chief Secretary attempted to show the existence of enormous crime in Ireland. If the hon. and learned Gentleman did not introduce statistics to prove his assertion, why make it at all? So far from showing that there is an abnormal state of crime in Ireland which requires the drastic treatment which this Bill proposes, not only did he fail to do so, but he never attempted to do so. The Chancellor of the Exchequer—who tried to put a little backbone into his invertebrate speech—admitted that there is very little abnormal crime in Ireland, and that it is not for the purpose of punishing crime that the Bill has been introduced at all. The right hon. Gentleman put it, in short, that the object of the Bill is to suppress the National League. Those are not exactly the words of the right hon. Gentleman, but that is the pith of his argument; and he went on to intimate that as soon as the National League is suppressed, then the Government will proceed to suppress the crime which may arise out of the suppression of the National League. Therefore, this is really a Bill, according to the reasoning of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the promotion of crime in Ireland and its punishment hereafter. If the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General desired to quote the Irish Judges, why did he not read the speech of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland which was made in Dublin yesterday, at the opening of the Commission of Oyer and Terminer? I have no doubt that the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland has read it; and if so, he must be aware how utterly it demolishes the absurd arguments which have been addressed to the House in support of the case, in quotations from the Judges' charges, as to the state of crime in Ireland. What are the real facts? In the City and County of Dublin—the Metropolis of Ireland—with the largest population in the country, with the exception of Cork, probably, what was the calendar which came before the Lord Chief Justice? There were only seven criminal cases for trial at the principal Criminal Commission in Ireland—similar to your Old Bailey or Central Criminal Court—three for the city, and four for the county. But that was not all, for there was an harangue delivered from the Bench—not such an harangue as was quoted by the Chief Secretary, for I am not aware that the Lord Chief Justice ever does indulge in political harangues. He is too strong-headed a man to do so; and when appealed to yesterday morning on a matter which he did not consider came within the purview of his Commission, he said—

> "I have nothing to do with anything in this Commission but to deal with the criminals who are sent before me for trial; and when you ask me to deal with anything else, I have nothing more to do with it than with what is happening in Mesopotamia."

Those are the words of the Lord Chief Justice, and they convey a bitter sarcasm upon other Judges who have gone through the country delivering political harangues, I will not say to order, but looking very like having been delivered to order. That was the statement made by Sir Michael Morris yesterday; and I wonder whether we shall ever again hear political harangues from the Judges quoted from the Treasury Bench. If we do, I would recommend those who quote them, in justification for the assertion that crime is prevalent in Ireland, also to read the statement of Sir Michael Morris in his place in the Queen's Bench at Dublin as Lord Chief Justice, that he had nothing more to do with matters outside his Commission than with what might be happening in Mesopotamia. So much for the harangues of the Judges which were so freely quoted by the Chief Secretary; and I think the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General has wisely abstained from going into the matter again. I will offer no further comment on that argument than the comment which was made indirectly by the Lord Chief Justice. There was another argument which the Solicitor General also avoided, because he saw that it had utterly broken down, and that was the statistics of crime. He did not adduce a single fact to prove that an abnormal state of crime exists in Ireland. He tried—I will not say to catch votes, because I am very much afraid that the votes of hon. Members are altogether inaccessible to argument, however strong the argument might be on one side or the other; but he endeavoured to catch the applause of the House by clap-trap arguments, which did not touch the real merits of the case. He told us that crime cannot be punished in Ireland, because witnesses cannot be got to give evidence of crime. Upon that point, also, it would have been better if we had more particulars. Not a single case has been proved. The hon. and learned Gentleman said—"Oh, if I were to read all the evidence contained in this Blue Book, it would be a matter of confused detail, which the House would not understand, and would prove nothing." But did anybody ask him to confine himself to the Blue Book? Could he not have given to the House some of the recent cases which he talked so much of, and point out any instance where a witness has been prevented from coming forward in order to give evidence in a criminal case because he has been intimidated? Why, what is the fact? A good deal was said by the Chief Secretary about the great number of cases in which witnesses have not come forward; but he judiciously avoided supplementing his argument by giving the smallest hint as to whether evidence was accessible, or to be got at in such cases. Then there is the old cry about threatening letters, which is always forthcoming when coercion is in the air. We are told that there are a large number of cases in which these letters have been written. These cases are capable of being multiplied to an indefinite extent, just as accommodation bills increase on the eve of a commercial crisis. We can furnish an infinity of these letters; there are many of them about now, and they form the largest item in this list of crimes. If we go back to the time of Forster's Coercion Act, they were even in greater plenty then than they are now; but I believe there were very few convictions for sending threatening letters. In one case the most atrocious threats were used to a person who was caught in the act of affixing the letters to his own doors. The case is on record; the man was tried and convicted for it, and it was one of the half-dozen convictions which took place. So much for the crime of writing threatening letters. Now I pass to other matters. This Bill is supposed to furnish the means of getting evidence. The worst crime of the class aimed at by the Bill is firing into dwelling-houses, and at their occupants. I should like to know what this Act does to tell those in the dwelling-house who it is that fires at a distance of a hundred yards in the night time? There is nothing in the Bill to enable those in the house, if they happen to be shot at, to say whether they are shot by the police patrol, or whether those who fired are Moonlighters. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said that this thing has been a crime since the days of Cain. No doubt, murder has been a crime since then. But no one that I know of approves the crimes which the Bill is intended to prevent. We, in England, are content to call a crime a crime, just as we call a spade a spade; but matters which would be settled in England by a fine of a few shillings are in Ireland not called by their proper names—they are called outrages. I am sorry that this abuse of rhetoric is still being used by Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench for the purpose of creating indignation against offences which, if they were called by their proper names, would shrink into very small dimensions. There is nothing in the Bill which will prevent or discover a single crime; but it is admitted by those who advocate it that it is intended for the suppression of the National League, and that will produce crime undoubtedly. Another reason alleged in support of the Bill is, that the jury system has broken down. I can tell the right hon. Gentleman what has broken down in Ireland. It is not the jury system—it is jury-packing that has broken down in Ireland. Whereas jury-packing has been hitherto denied, and it has been persistently asserted that juries have been indifferently chosen, and that the selection of Protestants has been the result of pure accident, jury-packing now stands before the House of Commons and the public in its naked deformity, It has poisoned the fountain of justice in Ireland; this is admitted since the Sligo panel was set aside on the ground that it was packed, and no one now ventures to say that jury-packing does not exist in Ireland. The real remedy would be to go back to the pure principle of choosing jurymen indifferently; that which is supplied by the Bill is no remedy. The proposal of the Government is to patch up the discredited system of jury-packing. They propose to take powers to change the venue from one district in Ireland to another. Although I am sure they will not send Orangemen to be tried at Cork, I am not at all sure that the Government will not send Nationalists for trial at Belfast. It remains to be seen whether this will effect the purpose of the Government, but I doubt whether it will tend to the punishment of crime, or to the better administration of justice in the smallest degree. Then there are clauses for extending the summary jurisdiction of magistrates. I think this should be called a provision for the extension of summary jury-packing, for it enables the Government to effect this in the most extensive way; but as to the securing of the conviction of criminals, that is quite another matter. Nothing has been said as to how fair it would be to send the Leaders of the National Party for trial before two stipendiary magistrates with summary jurisdiction. I say it would be about as fair to send a Nationalist Leader for trial before two stipendiary magistrates, as it would be to send a sheep for trial before two wolves—they would get about the same amount of fair play. I do not say that out of any ill-feeling against stipendiary magistrates. It is the nature of the wolf to make war upon sheep, and it is the nature of the stipendiary magistrate to feel that the Leaders of the National League are at war against his class, and he, therefore, uses his position for the purpose of making war against them and to keep himself on the Bench. I believe that the extension of the powers of summary jurisdiction which the Bill proposes to give to stipendiary magistrates in Ireland is un-Constitutional, excessive, and dangerous, and that it will, if carried out, tend only to renewed discontent and dissatisfaction, because the people of Ireland have no confidence in the impartiality of these men. The stipendiary magistrates are to have power to accumulate sentences. We have had an example of stipendiary magistrates in Belfast sentencing a person to 29 months' imprisonment. No doubt, hon. Gentlemen, including barristers, in this House will be surprised to hear that no Judge, from the Lord Chief Justice to the lowest Judge on the Bench, would give more than two years' imprisonment to any criminal, no matter of what crime he might be convicted. It is not very long ago that we were told by a right hon. Gentleman that the future policy of the Government should be a policy of equality, simultaneity, and similarity of legislation as between the different parts of the United Kingdom. This Bill is the first instalment of that policy. We have a Coercion Bill brought forward, imposing penalties and giving powers to magistrates which would not be endured for one moment in any county, or in the smallest hamlet in England. Then there is a provision for special juries, in order to get convictions. The special jury is to be struck in the same way as it is in England. But I should like to know whether the men who serve on the special juries are to be paid a guinea a-head for each case they try? But in England there is no special qualification for men as special jurymen; and I have seen in the box special jurymen who afterwards turned out to be swindlers and thieves, and who were put on the list simply because they asked to be put on. Such men as these will have a very strong motive for earning a guinea for every conviction they give. But the great alteration which is to be wrought by the Act is by trying cases in England, instead of Ireland. Now, I hope the Government will persevere in that proposal; because I know something of English juries and Irish juries, and I think it would be a change for the better to bring every prisoner to England, where juries cannot be packed as they have been in Ireland, and where a man would have a chance of being tried by 12 impartial men. I have no doubt that the result of this will be satisfactory. The next point is one to which I take a strong objection. I object to every part of the Bill which gives power to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to make laws. A legal association is declared illegal, and the declaration of the Lord

Lieutenant makes this the law, and subjects everyone connected with it to the penalties provided by this Bill. Such a monstrous proposal, I do not think, was ever made in this House. This power is, in reality, to be bestowed on the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant; and, however innocent a Society may be, if it is displeasing to the local magnates where it exists, he can proclaim it, and make a number of persons subject to the penalties of the Act. This is getting in the thin end of the wedge of arbitrary power—a power as arbitrary as ever existed in Russia or Turkey. You may as well expect that one limb of the body can be diseased, and the disease not extend to the other parts, as that this diseased state of law can exist in Ireland without spreading to the other parts of the Kingdom. So far as the check said to be provided upon the exercise of this power is concerned, nothing can be more illusory. I should like to know how often bye-laws made in this country are vetoed by the House of Commons. I do not think there is a single instance of a veto being applied to any bye-law that has been laid on the Table of the House. This is the sort of Act which the Government propose as a remedial measure for Ireland. The Bill is bad in principle and in every clause, and no argument worthy of the name has been adduced in support of it. There has been a deal of imputation and insinuation, but no argument; and I am convinced that the Bill has no basis whatever in any desire to institute beneficial legislation for Ireland. The intention of the Government is the suppression of the National League, and we are to pass the Bill simply because the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury tells us it is his duty to bring it in. If hon. Gentlemen opposite have handed over their consciences to the keeping of the First Lord of the Treasury, they are, of course, quite right in voting for anything which he tells them it is his duty to propose; but they must not forget that there are others who have duties to perform besides the right hon. Gentleman; and I am sure that if we had no better arguments against the Bill than he has for bringing it forward, we should be looked upon as miserable politicians. Not one Member on the opposite Benches has stood up to defend the Bill; no one has said anything more than that he has handed his conscience over to the First Lord of the Treasury. Now, I say, we are determined not to let the Bill go by default. We are determined to use every form of Constitutional opposition to it, and to expose the flimsy pretexts put forward in support of it. We propose to take every point in the Bill, and show that the Government have no grounds on which to rest their claim that it should become law. The real issue is between coercion and conciliation. The so-called remedial measure of the Government is a most summary measure for facilitating evictions in Ireland, and that is supposed to be the great remedy that is to effect conciliation with regard to Ireland. We have as much regard as Gentlemen opposite for peace and order—[*laughter*]—and although hon. Gentlemen may laugh and scoff as much as they please, we have as much regard as they have for the Union between the two countries. What we want is some such Union as that alluded to by Lord Salisbury in connection with the Colonies—a union of sentiment instead of the union of bondage which has so long existed. Failing that, we have every hope that the Irish people will bear this, as they have borne every Coercion Act in the past, and our advice will be to suffer it in the belief that their sufferings will not last long.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Lea.*)

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I do not rise to oppose the Motion of the hon. Member for the adjournment; but I desire to take this opportunity of thanking the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) for the firm and dignified course which he took on Saturday morning. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I wish to say a word or two with regard to the resumption of the debate. I think it is very unreasonable that the debate should be adjourned until to-morrow, and that the House should meet again on Thursday. Everyone knows that we, as well as the officers of the House, have been working very hard, and that the Speaker himself has suffered from the strain imposed upon him. In view of that fact, and that the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Courtney) has to work for double time, it is unreasonable that we should come down here on Thursday for the purpose of a parade debate, when nothing will be done; whereas to-morrow, if we met at 12 o'clock, the Government could, by suspending the Standing Orders, go on as long as they like with the Bill. We are to re-assemble on Tuesday, and I understand that the Government intend to subsequently grant a Vacation of a week or ten days in lieu of the usual Easter holidays. The Government are spurring a very jaded horse, and I do not think that the course which they are taking is one which will facilitate the real Business of the House.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am exceedingly desirous of meeting the views of hon. Members sitting below the Gangway, and in every other part of the House; but, as hon. Members know, the Government have announced it to be their imperative duty to sit until Thursday, and that, therefore, the debate on this Bill should be resumed to-day. But it is for every hon. Member to decide how soon they shall go away on Thursday. [MR. T. M. HEALY: We do not want to go away.] Then we must go on. I am anxious that there should be some rest given to the House after the second reading of the Bill, if it be possible; but the hon. and learned Gentleman and those acting with him must be aware that there is very important Business to be transacted by the House, and if the debate is unduly prolonged it may be quite impossible to carry out the arrangement which I desire to make. I can only say that it is my wish, and the wish of the Government, to do everything we can to meet the desires of hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House; and I would point out to the hon. Member that the Members of Her Majesty's Government need rest quite as much as any other hon. Gentleman opposite. I very much regret that it is not in my power to accede to the suggestion made by the hon. Member opposite with regard to to-morrow, and I only hope that he will assist us in our endeavours to enable hon. Members to get away as early as possible on Thursday.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am very glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman explain that he and his Colleagues over there are as much in need of rest as other Members of this House, as it furnishes us with some distinct prospect that they may possibly break down altogether before long. ["Oh, oh!"] I do not express a wish—I do not say I hope that the Government may break down; I only say that the right hon. Gentleman's statement shows a prospect of that which will afford a possibility—I was going to say not an unhoped-for possibility—of getting them out of an awkward position. I think we have every reason to complain of being brought down here on Thursday. I understand that we are to meet on that day at 2 o'clock. It is perfectly obvious that between 2 o'clock and 6 we are not likely to do very much work. We may do a certain amount of talking; but we shall do nothing else. [*Laughter.*] I beg hon. Members' pardon; I forgot that talking comes from this side of the House, and that howling comes from that side.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. CONYBEARE: I protest against being brought down here on Thursday afternoon. We want to get away in order to prepare our minds for the solemnities of Good Friday; and the prospect of being kept here until 6 o'clock on Thursday evening, harassed by these interminable debates, is not likely to put us in a proper frame of mind for the festivities of Easter. It appears to me that the programme the right hon. Gentleman has laid before us displays pretty clearly the inmost working of the Government's mind. They are willing, after the second reading of the Coercion Bill, to let Members away for a certain amount of holiday, if it be possible. As I pointed out the other night, it is obvious that the Government do not wish to allow their supporters out of their reach until they are committed to this Bill by passing the second reading. That is the secret of the whole of the rushing and forcing of this wretched business through. They know perfectly well that the indignation of the country is rising.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member must confine his remarks to the Question of adjournment.

MR. CONYBEARE: I intended, Sir, to refer to the Question of adjournment. I was endeavouring, perhaps in a rather circuitous manner, to explain my objection not to the present adjournment, which I think is a very good thing, but to the shortness of the interval which the Government contemplate allowing us at Easter.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): On this question, I desire to point out the very grave inconvenience that will arise from the shortening of our holidays. We are promised that, after the second reading of the Bill, we shall get that rest which it is agreed on all sides is required—which the Government admit is as necessary for them as we hold it to be for ourselves. The First Lord of the Treasury should bear in mind that hon. Members representing Irish constituencies to get home have to cross the sea, and have to cross it again to come back. As he must see, it will be scarcely worth their while to go home for a few days if they have to come back so soon for the purpose of passing the second reading of this Bill. The proposal of the Government is obviously an inconvenient one, particularly when we remember that the state of mind of our fellow-countrymen at home is one of considerable exasperation at this moment. If, at this period, we had a prolonged holiday, we Irish Members might be able to use our influence with our people in order to allay their excitement and encourage them to hope that before long this storm may blow over. I contend, Sir, that this fact, if the Government will take it into their consideration, forms a sufficient reason why we should get our accustomed holiday. We ought to be allowed to go home for a sufficient length of time to be able to exert a beneficial influence in the direction I have pointed out. Permit me also to draw attention to the fact that if we adjourn on Thursday, we shall have, as I said before, to cross the sea, and to take a fatiguing journey; and how shall we be fittingly prepared to take part in the solemnities of this holy season? I say, Sir, it is a most unreasonable thing to expect that we shall be content to put up with such a short holiday. Let me point out another reason—though the Government will hardly be likely to consider it sufficient. It is this—that not only are the minds of our fellow-countrymen in an exasperated state, but the minds of the people of England are somewhat excited; and it may be necessary for hon. Gentlemen representing English constituencies to explain to them the present state of the case.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This discussion is wholly irregular on the Question for adjournment. Hon. Members might, with the indulgence of the House, discuss these points on the Motion for the adjournment of the House; but the present discussion is altogether irregular.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I understood at Question time that the usual course would be adopted on this occasion as to the adjournment of the House for holidays——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is taking part in the irregularity I have just pointed out.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

———o———

SUPPLY—ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Army and Navy Estimates, and to report their observations thereon to the House."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I did not block this Notice; because I never expected that the Government would have, I will not say the audacity, but the hardihood to propose a Motion of this kind——

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Propose the adjournment.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr T. M. Healy,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* next.

METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Gilliat be a Member of the Select Committee on the Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2.) Bill."—(*Mr. O. V. Morgan.*)

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART-WORTLEY) (Sheffield, Hallam): I object to this Motion being taken now.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The half-past 12 o'clock Rule does not apply to Motions for the nomination of Committees; therefore the Motion can proceed.

MR. STUART-WORTLEY: The nomination of these Members has not come through the usual channel; therefore I must object to it. I hope the hon. Member will not press the Motion this evening.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): Then I will put the Motion down for to-morrow night.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 1.]

(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Jackson.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 24th March.*]

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into the said Committee."

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I do think we have great reason to complain of the manner in which this Bill has been dealt with, though I do not know whether the Government or the Opposition are responsible for it. Hon. Members, and myself amongst the number, have been kept hanging about the House for several nights expecting this Bill to be brought on—having, in fact, been told that it would be brought on. If I am not mistaken, the Government have consulted the convenience of one particular Member of the Opposition in this matter. I do not think, however, that they have any right to postpone a Bill, which it is generally understood is to be proceeded with, to suit the convenience of one Member, however distinguished that Member may be. We hear that the Motion to go into Committee upon this Bill is to be postponed until Tuesday. The proposal is most unreasonable, seeing that the Irish Members, who are deeply interested in the measure, have to start off to Ireland on Thursday, and have to be back in four days to proceed with the Crimes Bill. I call that nothing short of cruelty to animals. Why should not the Bill be taken to-night? We are ready to go on with it; it is not blocked; indeed, it has been in its present unblocked condition for over a month. Why should we be brought down here, night after night, merely for the convenience of a particular Gentleman who ought to be here to move the Amendments he has placed upon the Paper, if he has any desire to press those Amendments? I beg, Sir, to move, as an Amendment to the proposal before the House, to leave out the word "next" in order to insert the word "fortnight."

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "next," and insert the word "fortnight."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'next' stand part of the Question."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): I regret very much indeed that the arrangement which was made last night—namely, that this Bill should be proceeded with this evening, it has been found impossible to carry out. It has been intimated, through what I may call the ordinary channels of information in the House, that it is impossible to carry out that arrangement. The Government have undertaken not to proceed with it, and it would be a breach of faith, therefore, if they were to allow it to come on. But as the measure is one which must be proceeded with at the earliest possible moment, consistent with the pledges which have been given, it would be impossible to accede to the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member opposite (Mr. T. M. Healy).

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL (Hackney, S.): This is a Bill in which the Irish Members have a particular interest, and it therefore seems to me only fair and reasonable that their convenience should be consulted in dealing with it. I presume the delay which the right hon. Gentleman opposite declares to be necessary is to suit the convenience of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), who has put down on the Paper some very important Amendments. I would suggest to the Government, if they do not yield to the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy), and put off the Committee stage for a fortnight, that they should, at all events, agree to some substantial delay in order to give the Irish Members a reasonable opportunity of attending in their places in order to take part in the discussion.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Make it Tuesday week.

MR. HOLMES: No; Thursday week.

MR. T. M. HEALY: That will not do at all. I ask leave to withdraw my Motion, in order to substitute Tuesday week for Tuesday fortnight. I think that is a most reasonable proposal, and I hope that the First Lord of the Treasury, who refuses to give us anything like a holiday this Easter, will, at any rate, allow us a decent interval, so that we may get back from Ireland in time to take part in the discussion of this Bill in Committee.

MR. W. H. SMITH: Make it Thursday week. The hon. and learned Member is almost certain to be in his place on that day.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I promised to be in Leicester next Thursday week. I was wrong when I proposed to make it a fortnight; I would move to substitute the word "week" for the word "fortnight."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the hon. and learned Member withdraw his Amendment?

MR. T. M. HEALY: Yes.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Original Question again proposed.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I move to leave out the word "next," in order to insert "19th April." Some time ago, a number of Amendments which were put down against the Bill by hon. Members on this side of the House were withdrawn, in order to secure an early discussion of the measure. We have not, however, succeeded in securing that; and it is now proposed to take the Bill on a day which will be most inconvenient to all of us—on a day when few of us can be here. It will be in the highest degree detrimental to the administration of justice in Ireland if such questions as those involved in this Bill are discussed and decided by English Members in the absence of Irish Members. I think the Amendment I move should be carried without a Division. If the Bill is put down for Tuesday week we can go on with the consideration of its clauses, and the Government can either discuss its details and pass it, or abandon it altogether.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "next," and insert the words "19th April."—(*Mr. Chance.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'next' stand part of the Question."

MR. T. M. HEALY: It is almost disgusting that we should have to make these appeals again and again on a question of obtaining merely a day or two. The Government know there will be very few Members from Ireland here on Thursday week. The right hon. Gentleman says I shall be in my place on that day. Well, if I had known that this Bill was likely to come on on that day, I should not have made an arrangement to speak at a Radical meeting at Leicester; but, as it happens, I have made such an arrangement. There are other Members from Ireland who are also somewhat similarly situated, and I do say it is a most indecent thing to persist in ignoring our very reasonable desires in regard to such a measure as this. Many Irish Members will be absent on Thursday, and I would appeal to the First Lord of the Treasury to induce the right hon. and learned Gentleman sitting beside him (Mr. Holmes) to consent to the arrangement we propose. When we are asked to forego an Irish Parliament for the pleasure of sitting in this House, when we are asked to cross the Channel at least twice a-year, and to get sea-sick over the Act of Union, I think it is most unreasonable that our convenience should not be consulted with regard to the fixing of a day for the consideration of a Bill which only affects Ireland; and it is especially unreasonable when we consider that the Bill is, after all, only a minor Bill, and that the right hon. Gentleman is docking our holidays against our wishes. He expects Irish Members to come here and bow down to and even love this House, and yet he will make us no concessions—not even the little one of putting down this Bill for a day when it will be convenient to us to discuss it. It is really surprising that the Government should refuse to yield anything to us in this matter.

MR. HOLMES: The House will remember that this Bill was introduced at the earliest possible moment of the

Session. It was necessary to push it on as rapidly as possible; but for some time a large number of Amendments were put down against it by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite.

Mr. CHANCE: It has been without them for almost a month.

Mr. HOLMES: The Government have frequently endeavoured to bring it on. We were anxious that it should be considered on Tuesday; but, finding that that would be inconvenient, we agreed to a postponement until Thursday. In view of the necessity for passing the Bill, it would be impossible for us to concede more than that, and I think that hon. Gentlemen opposite should agree to the proposal. I would ask leave to withdraw the original Motion, in order to move that Thursday be substituted for Tuesday.

Mr. CHANCE: I have moved an Amendment to that original Motion, and I do not desire to withdraw it. I decline absolutely to do so.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original Motion was that the House will, on Tuesday, April 12, resolve itself into the said Committee; since which it has been moved to substitute Tuesday, April 19.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): I trust the Government will accept the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Kilkenny. I was one of those who put down Notice of Amendment for the Instruction of the Committee on this Bill. I am sure it is only reasonable that we should have some time after the Easter Recess to enable Irish Members to get back from Ireland. The Government have had, practically speaking, all the Session to make progress with this measure. The measure is one in which we Irish Members thought that a variety of beneficial changes might be introduced into the Judicature Law of Ireland. We accordingly put down certain Instructions to the Committee. The Government stated to us that they would not accept those Amendments, and that if we persevered in discussing them they would be compelled to drop the Bill. We so far met the views of the Government as to withdraw our Amendments, showing by that that we had no desire to defeat or delay the measure. It is a long time—several weeks—since we withdrew the Amendments. During the whole of that time the Government made no effort whatever to make progress with the Bill; but now they come forward with an attempt to put it down for Tuesday—the day the House meets after the Recess—knowing perfectly well that very few of the Irish Members will be present on that day. The inconvenience of that course being pointed out to them, they are candid enough to admit it, and now they propose a compromise which would make the state of things infinitely worse than the original proposal—that is to say, they propose to take the Bill on Thursday week. The request we make is that the Bill should be postponed until Tuesday week, and that seems to us a most reasonable suggestion on our part; because we have already shown that we have a *bonâ fide* interest in having the Bill brought before us. I think that if the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland has an interest in defeating this Bill—for the passage of which he is nominally responsible, but for which he has no real love—he could not do better than resist the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for South Kilkenny. I fancy that it is because he is anxious to see the Bill defeated that he adopts the stern and uncompromising attitude that he has done towards the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The Government, Sir, are displaying most unjustifiable obstinacy in this matter. What can it matter to them whether they take this comparatively small Bill on Thursday in next week, or on Thursday in the week after? It is true that in the early part of the Session the Bill was opposed by blocks and Motions for Instructions to the Committee by the Irish Members; but it is also true that for the last six weeks there has been no block against the measure, and for the past four weeks no Motion for Instruction. The Government might have made progress with the Bill. ["No, no!"] They know the Irish Members were willing that they should proceed with it. It is admitted by the hon. and learned Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench (Sir Charles Russell) that Irish Members have a great interest in the Bill, and have a strong claim to be heard on it. It has been pointed out that many of these Gentlemen will be unable to be here on Tuesday next, having to cross the sea, and having also to take long journeys overland. Many of them will not be here until they think it probable that the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill will be taken. That will not be on Tuesday in next week, nor for some time after. The probability is that unless the Amendment before the House is agreed to, there will be no adequate debate on the Bill, for there will certainly be no adequate expression of opinion on the part of those who represent the people who will be affected by the measure. The effect of refusing the Amendment of my hon. Friend will be that when the Bill comes on, not all, but some of the Irish Members will be in attendance, and we shall have a repetition of the conversation which has taken place to-night. The postponement of the Bill will be proposed, and discussed at some length, and the Government, after some attempts at resistance, will be in the long run compelled to accept such a Motion as that of my hon. Friend the Member for South Kilkenny. I submit that the judicious and sensible course would be not to wait until Tuesday or Thursday to make this arrangement, but to accept the Amendment at once.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I recollect that when this Bill was before the House, shortly after it was first introduced, we were told by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland that if it did not pass before the Circuits went out it would be useless, and would be withdrawn. Well, Sir, the Circuits have not only gone out, but they have come back again, and the judicial business of the country has been perfectly well carried on without the Bill. I am sorry to see that the First Lord of the Treasury has left his place; because he, at all events, is occasionally squeezable on matters of this kind. It seems to me that the proposition to postpone the further stage of the Bill to next Tuesday week is a most reasonable one.

Mr. PYNE (Waterford, W.): As we have had so much Irish debate in this House of late—everything has been purely Irish—I would suggest to the Government that they should allow English Members an Easter holiday by not taking Irish business at Easter time.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I would venture to suggest to the Government that they should make this, what seems to me, very small concession to the Irish Members. The Bill seems to have been put off from week to week, and it strikes me, as an outsider, that it would matter very little worse if it were put off for a short time longer.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 111; Noes 63: Majority 48.—(Div. List, No. 89.)

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. SEXTON: The Division which has taken place will show the Government that we are entitled to ask for a little further time before the Bill is taken in Committee. A considerable number of my hon. Friends who are interested in the Bill, and are qualified by professional training to deal with it are absent, and I can assure the Government that if they persist in the idiotic cause they are now taking, that we shall make a determined stand against the Bill being taken under the circumstances. They can surely gain no time by putting down the Bill a few days earlier than we desire; and, on the other hand, I am satisfied that the most convenient course will be to accept our suggestion.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: We are compelled to take this Bill on the earliest possible day, for reasons which have been stated. I assure the hon. Gentleman that there is no disposition to press this point against hon. Members below the Gangway, if we can possibly escape from the position in which we are placed; but we are under an obligation to the right hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) to proceed with the Bill without delay. I am unable to give the hon. Gentleman the pledge which he desires, but if hon. Members below the Gangway will consent to the Bill being taken on Tuesday, I will consider, before the Easter adjournment, if it is possible to meet their wishes. [Mr. Sexton was understood to signify dissent.] At present, the latest day is Thursday—unless some other arrangement is made by hon. Gentlemen opposite. The Bill would have been taken to-night, but for the absence of the right hon. Member for East Wolverhampton, to whom we are pledged.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I wish to point out that one hon. Gentleman has withdrawn a Notice of Opposition to the Bill, on the understanding that it would not be gone on with. I must express my dissatisfaction at the position taken up by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury with regard to the Bill. Many hon. Members on these Benches, who are interested in the measure, have been waiting night after night for the Bill to come on. Their hope has been so deferred, that they have become heartily sick of the measure. We cannot but think that the Government intend to bring forward the Bill when we are not in our places to deal with it. In order that we may get an assurance that the Bill will be taken at a proper date, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I desire to say that I shall not be backward in taking part in the discussion of the Bill when the time arrives; unless, by the arrangement of the Government, I lose all chance of doing so. I am bound to say that the unyielding obstinacy of the Government is something on which they cannot be congratulated. I have observed that a great interest is taken in this measure by the leading Members of the Party to which I belong. If the discussion on the measure be taken on the day set apart for it by the Government—that is to say, to-morrow week—it will be utterly impossible for me to indulge in the pleasure and profit I shall derive from listening to that discussion. The hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) and myself have made appointments which will prevent our being present on that day. I cannot understand the obstinacy shown by the Government in this matter, except on the ground that they wish to give another proof of the firm and resolute conduct they showed on entering Office. If that is so, I think that their conduct in a small matter of this kind is extremely ungraceful.

Mr. CHANCE: The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury has expressed a hope that if we make an arrangement to take the Bill on Tuesday, the Government will be able to fall in with our views. As it is not possible to make that pledge, I support this Motion in behalf of hon. Members opposite as well as those on these Benches.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I appeal to the right hon. Gentlemen to say whether we are asking too much in this matter of the adjournment of the debate. [*Cries of* "Agreed!"] I think it is too bad of English Gentlemen to shout down the appeals which come from these Benches in reference to a small Irish Bill. If we cannot get two or three days for the purpose of discussing this Bill later on, what may we expect in a case of greater magnitude and importance? [*Interruption.*] It is lamentable that English Gentlemen are so bound by Party ties that they will not listen to a reasonable request which comes from this side of the House, and that is one of the reasons why we fight the Tory Party as much as we possibly can.

Mr. HOLMES: I think, on consideration, hon. Members opposite will see that the proposal which my right hon. Friend (Mr. W. H. Smith) has made is not an unreasonable one. He asks that the Bill may stand for Tuesday, and he says that he will take the proposal of hon. Members into consideration before the House meets on Thursday, with the view, if possible, of making an arrangement in accordance with their views. I point out to hon. Members that if the Motion for Adjournment were agreed to, the Question would come forward to-morrow, and nothing would be gained.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT (1854) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.—[Bill 184.]

(*Mr. King, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Lacaita, Mr. White, Mr. Puleston, Lord Claud Hamilton, Admiral Field, Mr. Bond.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress* 17*th March.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Sir John Gorst (Chatham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1 (Short title).

Mr. CRAIG (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Mr. Raikes. [*Laughter.*]

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. KING (Hull, Central): I beg to move the omission of the word "pilots" in page 1, line 6, Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I rise to a point of Order. I wish to ask you, Mr. Chairman, whether the hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. Craig) was not in possession of the Committee when you called upon the hon. Member for Hull (Mr. King).

The CHAIRMAN (Sir John Gorst): No; the hon. Member was not in possession of the Committee. I never called upon him.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 6, leave out "pilots."—(*Mr. King.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'pilots' stands part of the Clause."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. We have been kept here for over an hour and a-half on a question of a most trumpery character by the obstinacy of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, in refusing to give way to the most reasonable request made to them, and now, at 2 o'clock in the morning, they ask that progress should be made with a Bill of this important description. I am not willing to be kept here in this most tedious manner by hon. Gentlemen opposite. Surely hon. Gentlemen will admit that we have some rights.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Mr. KING (Hull, Central): I must point out that I am not responsible for the lateness of the hour at which the Bill is brought on. I am very desirous that the Bill should pass, and am quite willing to sit some time yet; but if hon. Gentlemen opposite are resolved—— [*Cries of* "Go on!"]

Mr. PULESTON (Devonport): I hope the hon. Gentleman (Mr. King) is not going to agree to the Motion. Hon. Gentlemen opposite are equally interested with some of us in the passing of this Bill; indeed, I have received the assurance of several hon. Gentlemen, including the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. T. M. Healy) who has just spoken, that no people are more anxious than the people of Ireland for the passing of this Bill. Hon. Gentlemen opposite have expressed themselves in many practical ways in favour of this measure. This is a Bill of only one clause; surely we may now make progress with it. I certainly hope my hon. Friend will not assent to the Motion to report Progress.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Sir John Gorst, I really must protest against the system of intimidation which is being practised by hon. Gentlemen opposite. My breath was nearly taken away when I heard the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Puleston) tell the hon. Member for Central Hull (Mr. King) not to dare to attempt to assent to the Motion to report Progress. We are brought here, night after night, to discuss a Coercion Bill for Ireland; but if this sort of business goes on, surely the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) will bring in some Rule of Procedure to prevent coercive proceedings in this House.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): I have no wish to reply to the somewhat heated language which the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Tanner) has used; but merely to point out that though the Bill contains but one clause, it is a Bill of great importance. The Amendment raises a very important question about foreign pilots, and when the hon. Gentleman (Mr. King) the Mover of the Bill agrees to report Progress, I really think it is only fitting of the Committee to assent to the Motion.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I beg to say one word in reply to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Devonport (Mr. Puleston). The hon. Gentleman appealed to us to allow the Bill to proceed. The truth of the matter is that if the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) persists in pushing Bills through the House in this manner, the result will be that no Bills will——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is not in Order in making such remarks.

Mr. BIGGAR: May it please you, Sir John Gorst, the reason why I rise at 2 o'clock to support the Motion to report Progress is that the time since 1 o'clock was entirely wasted by a wrangle——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is not in Order in referring to a debate which took place on a previous Bill.

Mr. BIGGAR: I wish to point out that we have been put back one hour.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. Member will observe the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. BIGGAR: Sir John Gorst, it will afford me the greatest pleasure in the world to see this Bill pass through Committee. The truth is, I signed a "round robin" in favour of the principle contained in the Bill. I very strongly approve of the principle of the Bill, and am only opposed to proceeding with the measure at this time of the night. If the Committee stage were taken at a reasonable hour to-morrow evening, or on Thursday evening, or on some evening next week, it would give me great pleasure to see it disposed of.

Question put, and *agreed to*.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Tuesday* next.

PHARMACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[*Lords*.]

(*Dr. Farquharson*).

[BILL 210.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Dr. Farquharson.*)

Mr. HERMON-HODGE (Lancashire, Accrington): I rise to move the adjournment of the debate, and I hope that in doing so I am not taking any step which may be considered improper on the part of a new Member, or that I am doing anything which is contrary to the letter of the law which regulates Parliamentary usage, of which I am somewhat ignorant; but I am sure it is contrary to the spirit in which legislation is carried on in this House that a Bill of vital importance to those who are immediately affected by it should be rushed through Committee at this hour of the morning (2.10 a.m.), especially when it was only at half-past 2 o'clock yesterday morning that the second reading was agreed to, after what I venture to say was but a brief and somewhat inadequate discussion. I must plead my ignorance of the Rules of Procedure for not placing a block to the second reading of the Bill. I found an hon. Member had anticipated me in doing so, and I was not aware that the block had been taken off; and I venture to say a large number of other hon. Members were ignorant that the block had been removed. Therefore it was that the second reading was taken with but a slight amount of opposition. Without trespassing upon the attention of the House further, I beg to move that this debate be now adjourned.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Hermon-Hodge.*)

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hermon-Hodge) has anticipated the action I myself intended to take. I merely intended to move you, Sir, out of the Chair, and then to propose to report Progress. I know that several Members are deeply interested in this Bill, and desire some time to consider it, and to put down what Amendments they think necessary. If the House will consent to you leaving the Chair, I shall be very pleased to postpone the consideration of the Bill in Committee.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): In consequence of the remarks which fell from the hon. Member (Mr. Hermon-Hodge), I feel called upon to explain why I withdrew my block to the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman's remarks would not be relevant to the Motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Sir, the hon. Gentleman (Dr. Farquharson) who moved that you do leave the Chair, has, I understand, undertaken that if the House will assent to his Motion, he will move that the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again on Tuesday, the 19th instant. That will give ample opportunity to hon. Members who desire to put down Amendments, or to challenge the principle of the Bill to do so. I trust, therefore, that the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hermon-Hodge) will see his way to withdraw his Motion.

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I do not quite share the view of the hon. Member (Mr. Chance). As far as I understand the Rules of the House, they are to the effect that any hon. Member has the right to address you upon the principle of a measure on the question that you do leave the Chair; but that no hon. Member is at liberty to address you upon the principle of a Bill upon any particular clause in Committee. Therefore, I should strongly advise my hon. Friend (Mr. Hermon-Hodge) to press his Motion for the adjournment of the debate to a Division; because, if it be carried, he will be able, when the Motion that you do leave the Chair is again made, to raise a discussion on the principle involved in the Bill. If he allows the Bill to get into Committee, he will be confined to the discussion of the clauses as they are put by the Chairman of Committees.

Dr. TANNER: I am certainly inclined to support the Motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Accrington (Mr. Hermon-Hodge); because there are several subjects in connection with the Bill which demand investigation. It has been alleged that the Bill will assimilate the English and Scotch law relating to the chemist and druggist trade to that of Ireland; but I am not at all satisfied on the point, and, therefore, it is as well time should be allowed for consideration.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I think my hon. Friend the Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) would do well to assent to the adjournment of the debate. The second reading of the Bill was only agreed to between 2 and 3 o'clock yesterday morning, and, therefore, it is hardly wise in him to wish to take another stage now. This is an important measure, one affecting the livelihood of thousands of persons.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): As a matter of Parliamentary tactics, I advise the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Hermon-Hodge) to persevere with his Motion. If the Speaker gets out of the Chair, the opponents of a Bill become completely powerless. If the hon. Gentleman persists in his Motion, and puts a block to the Bill, the probability is that he will obtain an opportunity of discussing the Bill on its merits at a reasonable time of night. I am very strongly in favour of the adjournment of the debate on this particular Bill at this particular time.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 93; Noes 29: Majority 64.—(Div. List, No. 90.)

Debate *adjourned* till *Tuesday* 19th April.

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask what will be the course of Business on Thursday? The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House told us that the usual course on occasions of adjournment for the holidays would be followed.

Mr. JACKSON: The right hon. Gentleman said the usual course would be followed. Inquiries have since been made as to what the usual course is, and the right hon. Gentleman finds that there is no rule—that the Motion for adjournment is taken either at the commencement or at the close of the day's proceedings. The right hon. Gentleman is anxious to consult the convenience of the House; and on an understanding being arrived at as to what would be most convenient to the House, the Motion for adjournment will be agreed to either at the commencement of the proceedings on Thursday or at the end. Probably some understanding may be arrived at to-morrow as to the best course to follow.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): May I be allowed to point out that there are two measures which we have obtained leave to introduce that we wish to have read a first time.

Motion, by leave, *withdrawn.*

COMPANIES ACTS CONSOLIDATION AND AMENDMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to move the House, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend the Companies Acts.

Resolution *reported*:—Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. James Maclean, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Mowbray, and Mr. Lees.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 218.]

MOTIONS.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT (NO. 3) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to alter and amend the provisions of the sixth section of "The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886," *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. Clark, Mr. Angus Sutherland, Dr. M'Donald, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Lyell, Colonel Duncan, Mr. James Stuart, and Mr. Chance.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 219.]

MERCHANDISE MARKS ACT (1862) AMENDMENT BILL.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill do consist of Seventeen Members:—The Committee was accordingly *nominated* of,—Mr. James Robertson, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Frank Hardcastle, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Kimber, Mr. Hozier, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Hoyle, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. Howell, Sir Frederick Mappin, Mr. Frederic Maclean, Mr. Richard Chamberlain, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Lane, and Baron Henry De Worms, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Baron Henry De Worms.*)

ADMIRALTY AND WAR OFFICE (SITES).

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to reconsider the Plans and Proposals for an Admiralty and War Office.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee to report whether some or all of the existing buildings of the Admiralty may not with advantage be retained.

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of Seventeen Members:—The Committee was accordingly *nominated* of,—Sir William Harcourt, Lord George Hamilton, Mr. Henry H. Fowler, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Colonel Malcolm, Mr. Howell, Mr. Isaacs, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Edward Hardcastle, Mr. William Bright, Mr. Seager Hunt, Sir William Crossman, Mr. Patrick Joseph Power, Mr. Byrne, and Mr. David Plunket, with power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. David Plunket.*)

House adjourned at half after Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 6*th April*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILLS (*by Order*)—*Third Reading*—Belfast Corporation (Lagan Bridge), *debate adjourned*; Newark and Ollerton Railway, and *passed*.

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Public Libraries Acts Amendment (No. 2) * [220].

Second Reading — Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [217] [*Second Night*], *debate further adjourned*; Church Sites (Compulsory Powers Repeal) [53], *debate adjourned*; Allotments and Cottage Gardens Compensation * [167].

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, and of his unavoidable absence from the House this day.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and, after Prayers, counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July, 1855.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BELFAST CORPORATION (LAGAN BRIDGE) BILL [*Lords*] (*by Order.*)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I mentioned yesterday that this Bill was being pushed through the House in a questionable manner—at an entirely unnecessary rate of speed. It is a Bill to authorize the construction of a bridge over the River Lagan in Belfast, and there seems to be a pretty general feeling in that town that the occasion of the construction of the bridge should be made use of for the purification of the river, which at present is a considerable nuisance and a standing danger to public health. I am not fully informed as to the circumstances, as it has been the practice of the Town Council of Belfast to abstain from consulting the ratepayers or the Parliamentary Representatives of the town in regard to matters of legislation. That system, no doubt, has had considerable attractions hitherto; but if it is continued any longer I can promise the members of the Corporation that in future it will be found extremely troublesome. The hon. Gentleman the Member for East Belfast (Mr. De Cobain) has been good enough to say that he will ascertain the facts when he goes to Belfast, and will immediately communicate with me on the subject. In order to give time for this, I beg to move that the third reading of the Bill be postponed until Friday week.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be adjourned till Friday, 15th April."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Mr. EWART (Belfast, N.): I do not object to the adjournment of the debate. I think the charge the hon. Gentleman has made against the Town Council of Belfast is wholly unwarranted. The bridge is a public necessity, and I am sorry that one of the Members for Belfast should again be interfering with the public good of the town.

Mr. SEXTON: I would say, in explanation, that the charge I make is perfectly true. I am one of the Representatives of Belfast, and the Town Council have not done me the honour to make any representation to me on the subject.

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *adjourned* till *Friday* 15th April.

QUESTIONS.

COAL MINES, &c., REGULATION BILL—THE SECOND READING.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, considering the great importance of the Mines Regulation Bill, which will affect the lives and well-being of more than half a million of workers, he can arrange to take the second reading at a time when there will be an opportunity to discuss the main provisions of the Bill?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he was under the impression that there was a general disposition on the part of those interested to accept the principle of this Bill. He proposed, therefore, to take the second reading as a formal proceeding, reserving for the Committee stage the many points that were likely to arise on the discussion of the various clauses of the Bill. He could not but think that that would be the more convenient course, and would conduce to the general progress of the Bill, which it was very desirable should be read a second time before Easter. He should propose a considerable interval between the second reading and the Committee stage, in order to give hon. Members time to prepare any Amendments they might think desirable. He trusted the hon. Member would assent to that course.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked, Whether it would be in Order to make second reading speeches at the Committe stage?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER stated that on the Motion to go into Committee observations of a general character might be made.

LAW AND POLICE—SEARCH BY THE POLICE AT HOYLAND SILKSTONE (BARNSLEY).

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been drawn to the following paragraph, which appeared in *The Barnsley Independent* of 2nd April:—

> "On Monday both excitement and curiosity were caused by the arrival at Hoyland Silkstone of a staff of police from Barnsley, who proceeded to search about 500 of the men and boys employed at the colliery there. It appears that, about 9 o'clock in the morning, a girl named Wild, who was picking coal from the rubbish heap of the colliery, found a loaded pistol amongst the dirt which had been thrown out of a corve. . . . . The pistol had a screw barrel, and was indifferently loaded with powder and ball, but no wadding or paper had been used for the purpose of ramming the charge home. Nothing of a suspicious character was found, however, and inquiries are still being made in order to find out for what purpose the pistol had been taken down the pit;"

whether he will state under what legal authority the police acted in searching the persons of these men and boys; and, whether, if they acted without legal authority, he will cause inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the case?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): My attention has not been called to this matter. I have written to the Chief Constable of the West Riding of Yorkshire asking him to favour me with a Report. When I receive it, I shall be happy to give an answer to the hon. Gentleman.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—"THE QUEEN *v.* DILLON AND OTHERS"—DISCHARGE OF THE RECOGNIZANCES.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Do the Government intend to discharge the recognizances of the traversers in the late State trials, upon whom they have served notice of discontinuance of the prosecution, or will they enter a *nolle prosequi;* and, how will the £100 seized by the police from the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), at Loughrea, be disposed of?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University), in reply, said, notice had been given to the traversers that it was not intended to proceed further with this case; a *nolle prosequi* would be entered, and any property taken for the purpose of evidence would be restored to the persons from whom it was taken.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL—LEASEHOLDERS.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Do the Government propose that the holders of leases, other than those excepted in their Bill, shall, whether they object or not, have their leases broken, and be thereby subjected to the disabilities imposed by the Land Act of 1881, such as the right of the landlord to apply for the resumption of the holding, or an increase of the rent thereof?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): The holders of leases within the first section of the Government Land Bill will be placed in the same position as ordinary present tenants from year to year, as if their leases had expired on the day the Act becomes law; and as such may have a fair rent fixed on the application of the landlord, unless they have given substantial consideration for the making of the lease. I would, however, point out that the leases within this section are those that would come to end within 60 years after the year 1881, and do not include perpetuity leases of any kind. I may also add that the Government Bill corresponds in the foregoing respects with that of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) introduced last autumn.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to give Notice that in consequence of the great alarm amongst the holders of what might be called beneficial leases, that I will give the strongest opposition to this proposal.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—THE WHITEBOY ACTS AND LATER STATUTES.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked, When copies of the Whiteboys Act and other Acts proposed to be revived by the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill would be in the hands of the Members?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he was not able to give the hon. and learned Member the information he desired.

MR. SEXTON: Can the Solicitor General?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. GIBSON) (Liverpool, Walton): No; but the matter is being proceeded with.

MR. SEXTON: Can anybody?

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SECOND NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.) said, in balancing the speeches of hon. Members below the Gangway with those from hon. Members above, he found proof of the necessity for the Bill in the fact that, though the one section denied that there was anything in the condition of Ireland requiring this change in the law, other hon. Members admitted the state of things to be extremely bad, though they could not find a remedy in this Bill. No other alternative, however, was presented. Anybody having knowledge of Ireland —outside the National League—must admit that if individual liberty was to be maintained in Ireland some amendment of the law was a necessity. Upon individual liberty we must rely for the creation of a sound public opinion—such a public opinion as in England tends to keep things straight. Too much had there been in Ireland in the past of mere prejudice for or against the landlords. He could not pretend that he had any liking for the Bill, nor did he believe that any hon. Member desired it should pass unless he had a conviction of its absolute necessity. But that was the case with all amendments of the Criminal Law. Just as two years ago there was an amendment of the Criminal Law in England, and the Bill, though disliked extremely, was passed, because the occasion demanded it; so if individual liberty in Ireland was to be maintained, it was virtually necessary to amend the Criminal Law in Ireland at the present time, and this Bill must pass, however distasteful the duty may be. He denied that this Bill would destroy the just liberties of the Irish people. There was crime in Ireland at the present time, and though he did not say it was very great, yet the serious feature was that crime went unpunished, that it was difficult to get witnesses to give evidence, and, even with evidence, juries would not convict. To meet this state of things, and the Boycotting and intimidation that existed, the Bill was framed. He did not believe the Leaders of the National League knew how serious was the amount of Boycotting carried on by branches of the League beyond central control. Those hon. Members wished to stop it; but they could not control all the various organizations of all their branches, and the little petty Boycottings going on throughout Ireland were unknown to them. It was part and parcel of the system that it should be so. A small local committee met, and decided that this or that man in the district should be Boycotted. The person condemned might have warning or not, and often without warning a man was subjected to Boycotting, his trade ruined, and his life made miserable. He did not believe that the League Leaders desired this; but it was so, and many a peasant on the mountain side could not go to bed without the dread of an attack on his dwelling for arms or for punishment. But it was a landlords' Bill, argued some hon. Members. Well, if the persons and property of landlords required protection, why should not the law afford it to that class equally with the tenants or anybody else? It was an unfortunate truth that many landlords in Ireland were reaping the whirlwind, sown in the past by their ancestors, no doubt. The history of the past showed that landlords were often very tyrannical over their tenants. It was perfectly well known that there was a time when a few landlords meeting together would reckon up the votes of their tenants, settle who should represent the constituency, and march their tenants to the poll like sheep to vote for a particular candidate. But the same thing, in a lesser degree perhaps, was done in England, and such days have long gone by, swept away by the Ballot Act, by Land Law reforms, and the growth of freedom of opinion; but why should the tyranny of landlords be replaced by a tyranny of the National League? Why should they not have freedom all round? But with your Bill you contend against a nation, said one hon. Member. The hon. Member for Northampton said the other night that we were contending with an entire nation. That was not a fact. There was no means of knowing how many sympathized with the National League, and how many opposed. Take the Election of 1885 as a test, for then there were more contests—there were some two-thirds of the Irish people in favour of the National League, and a third in opposition; and he believed the case was very much the same now. The National League had a large number of Representatives; but how did they obtain that position? The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) decided who should sit for a constituency—he might change his nominee if he chose, and had often done so. The change had in one instance been made three times, the people accepting one candidate after another before they were called upon to go through the form of electing him. Mere machines were they, as the hon. Member for West Cavan (Mr. Biggar) once said they would be, in the hands of the hon. Member for Cork. Under that system a Member was returned by the votes of a vast mass of ostensibly illiterate electors, numbering in some instances about two-thirds of the entire number of votes recorded for them. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] It was so in the East Donegal Election for 1885. Would anybody maintain the voters were really illiterate? For a month before the Election they had been told from Sunday to Sunday whom to vote for. No doubt they were confused, because they had been told to vote for three candidates, and they could not be trusted to vote right; therefore, they were ordered to vote illiterate, and an agent of the National League attended the polling station, and openly, before this agent, the voter recorded his vote. If this was the freedom the Leaders of the National League sought to infuse, he believed there was reason to impose restrictions upon such freedom, and for that reason supported the present Bill. There had been Boycotting of individuals everyone admitted; but 800 cases, it was urged, were no great number. But the extent of the system was not fully known, and the number of persons who yielded their independence at once or submitted on fear of being Boycotted, must remain an unknown quantity. The branches of the League were not very particular who they Boycotted. Not long ago he happened to be in the house of a tradesman who was Boycotted at the time. During the famine time that tradesman supplied goods freely on credit, and his books showed debts to the extent of £5,000 or £6,000. Yet because he refused to sustain the action of the National League he was Boycotted. Was that a desirable freedom? Should there be a remedy for such a state of things? Not alone at individuals did this Boycotting strike. The hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) recently put a Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), directing attention to the fact that in the village of Tobermore, of 400 inhabitants, there was no policeman, and pointing to the necessity of establishing a police station there. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary answered, as anyone able to obtain information of the place must have answered, that it was an extremely peaceable, orderly village, and did not need a policeman. But the knowledge of the ins-and-outs of the case disclosed here the system of Boycotting. It happened that the inhabitants of Tobermore were Protestants, and gave a solid Unionist vote, and thus the village incurred the odium of the National League. Hence it was that the larger districts behind this little village, and where the sympathizers with the National League were in strong force, Boycotted the little village, and warned cattle dealers and others that if they had any dealings with Tobermore they would not trade with the larger Nationalist district behind. Against Boycotting of this kind was the Bill required. There was a sort of social Boycotting, they were told, existing in England, and Nonconformists who might otherwise be appointed as magistrates were not appointed. Now, Presbyterians in the North of Ireland contended that they were Boycotted by not having their proper share of appointments; but, for all that, they did not throw themselves into the arms of the National League. They knew well that they would live down any petty Boycotting like that, which was as nothing compared with the Boycotting under the National League, which might ruin a man's trade and spoil his home. There was much in one clause of the Bill to excite national prejudice, and naturally there was strong feeling against the change of venue clauses. His own belief was that the object of the change of venue to England was to relieve Dublin jurors from the great strain that had been put upon them. Irish jurors would not bring in the verdicts that were expected from the evidence, not in ordinary cases; but in cases of an agrarian or political character it was almost impossible to obtain a fair trial. It was unfortunately in the nature of things that if a Nationalist jury would not convict a Nationalist, so an Orange jury would not convict an Orangeman; and to meet this state of things the Government propose a change of venue, and offer a trial in England of the fairness of which there could be no question. In the powers to be conferred on stipendary magistrates, he shared some of the objections urged. He hoped the Government would consider this point, and take care that, not only should the men appointed have some legal knowledge, but that they should have some experience upon which reliance could be placed to obtain public confidence in his administration of justice. Unfortunately there was not that confidence which was to be desired in the appointments by any Irish Government of stipendiary magistrates in a matter of that kind; and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. W. H. Smith) or the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) would take care that not only men with some slight knowledge of law, but barristers of some years' standing, should be appointed to sit on the Bench, so as to secure not only that there should be a fair trial, but that public confidence in the administration of justice should exist. The hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Illingworth) the other night said that that was a Bill to maintain the present land system in Ireland. That the Bill was designed to maintain the present land system he utterly denied. If he (Mr. Lea) thought so himself he would not vote for the Bill. He believed that the present land system demanded immediate reform. Who suffered most by the present disorder, the tenant or the landlord? Under it, the landlord, if he had a margin to live on, could come over to England and reside there; but the small tenant farmer, who was the greatest sufferer, by the very conditions of his existence, must remain in Ireland under the tyranny of the National League; and it was for his protection chiefly that the amendment of the Irish Criminal Law was demanded. The tenants, with protection in their homes and their industry, would find the state of the country improved and themselves better off after the passing of a Bill like the present one than they were before it. The bulk of his supporters were small tenant farmers, and he did not believe one of them would fear the alteration of the Criminal Law in the manner proposed. But the Bill was but one portion of the Government scheme; their were other remedial measures to be passed. He confessed he had not seen the Bill introduced in the House of Lords, but he had heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), and found in it much that met his own views; but they had pledges from the Government that the Bill introduced in "another place" was only a prelude to the introduction of a larger and greater measure of reform. It was to the abolition of dual ownership of the land that everything pointed and must point; and he trusted that the Government would fulfil their pledges both as regarded the amendment of the Criminal Law and the present land system in Ireland; and with that effected he looked forward to a period of more contentment than Ireland had enjoyed this century. Moreover, if the poverty of the West of Ireland was to be remedied, public works would have to be encouraged and other matters attended to. To the Commission on Public Loans and on Arterial Drainage, and possible legislation on those subjects, he could not do more than allude; but he saw in the Government programme the intention to remove the causes of disturbances and trouble in Ireland, and had hopes of its success. He believed that if the Irish people only in time looked at the programme of the Government—that order must be restored and dual ownership abolished — they would have peace and prosperity in Ireland. With some reluctance he supported the Bill, and he voted for it as part of a great scheme Her Majesty's Government were pledged to press upon Parliament, and he trusted that the future peace and prosperity of Ireland would show the policy of Her Majesty's Government to have been the right and true one.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, he had listened to many extraordinary arguments put forward in the support of the Bill, but of all the extraordinary Liberal Unionist speeches the one they had just heard was the most extraordinary, and none were so wide of the mark as the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Londonderry (Mr. Lea). While the admission that it could not be pretended there was any excess of crime in Ireland was creditable to his candour, it could not be said to afford any justification for the Bill. With the exception of opposition to rent which he (Mr. Handel Cossham) did not regard as a crime but as a virtue, and could prove by quotations from the Commission Report, there was not in Ireland to-day so great a proportion of crime to population as there was in any other part of the Kingdom. Then, on what ground were they asked in the latter end of the 19th century to pass a Bill so counter to modern civilization. It was a dangerous sentiment, the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Londonderry expressed, refusing to acknowledge the bulk of the elected Representatives as expressing the opinions of the country. He had his own views as to the means by which Tory Members were returned to Parliament, and thought the electors might have been deceived, but there they were and must be recognized, and even so must the voice of Ireland be acknowledged through her Representatives. The hon. Member laid claim to special knowledge of the extent of Boycotting, and would it not be better, instead of indulging in vague innuendoes, that he placed his information in the hands of the Government, who would be glad to support their case with his evidence?

Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.) said, he claimed no special knowledge. He said there was a good deal of Boycotting in Ireland not heard of.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM said, if nobody knew of it then it was not very serious. He threw out the challenge—and let the hon. Member for South Londonderry accept this challenge—and he offered to produce 10 cases of Boycotting in small villages in England for one in Ireland. Why, Nonconformists were systematically Boycotted. When last Session the Liberals declared the choice of government for Ireland lay between the system of the present Government—coercion, and the system of the late Government — conciliation, it was asserted by Unionists that there was a middle course; but where was it? In truth there was no middle course. You must govern by the sword or by the Constitution. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) seemed to think that the world was made for the landlords, and that others who came into it ought to apologize for their existence. He did not agree with the right hon. Gentleman on that point, and he believed that when the people saw how they were taxed and how their pockets were being picked in order to keep up the landlord class in Ireland, they would make short work of the system, and as sure as the rising of to-morrow's sun the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) would rule the Government of Ireland in the future. They would yet teach the right hon. Gentleman that he was under a delusion. The condition of the Liberal Unionists in the country was pitiable, and he could only compare them to certain creatures mentioned in Holy Writ—he did not wish to particularize further—which ran down into the sea and were destroyed. They reminded him of the sailor's parrot; instead of teaching the Tories to pray they taught them to swear. Since Liberal remedial legislation had been introduced to Ireland crime had fallen 75 per cent. If the Crimes Bill passed, the result would be to increase crime in Ireland, as all such measures had increased crime. The Bill was unjust in its principle; it was a violation of every principle of Christianity and every principle of humanity, and if it became law it would utterly demoralize and debase the public opinion of Ireland. Every time we had relaxed the Criminal Law crime had decreased. In this matter the Tory Party seemed to be like Lot's wife; they were always looking back and getting turned into pillars of salt. He had written in favour of Home Rule 15 years ago; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, having laid it down that we must know what the people of Ireland really wanted, accepted the expression of their views involved in the results of the Election following the last Reform Act. Even Conservative candidates, having the support of the Irish Party, disavowed coercion and hinted at a good slice of Home Rule. Cruel laws made a cruel people, bad laws a bad people, and a Bill like this would make the people as demoralized as the law itself. The pivot of the Bill was the stipendiary magistrates, who were appointed by the Lord Lieutenant, who would make the law, decide what was illegal, and direct his minions to carry out the law which he made. It would be better to give the power to the Chief Secretary, who would be responsible to that House. We had won many of our liberties through good men resisting bad laws and refusing to recognize despotic law and order, and through brow-beaten juries refusing to convict them. The Chief Secretary would have stood by the side of Nebuchadnezzar when he put the three Nonconformists into the furnace, or by the side of Charles I., who lost his head because he was in favour of what he called law and order. If a law were unjust the man who tried to get it altered was a patriot. The object of the Bill was not to put down crime but it was to stop the expression of political opinion. But you could not do that and continue Constitutional government. No man had said more against force than some of those who were going to support this Bill, to both the principles and the details of which he would offer the most determined opposition.

Mr. LEES (Oldham) said, he did not think that his constituents were so foolish, after having elected him last July, with a distinct statement of his views on this matter, to have changed their minds so completely in so short a space of time. [An hon. Member: Next time.] —possibly they might, but he thought "next time" was in the dim and distant future. In his Election address he said—

> "There was a great deal of nonsense talked about coercion which would hardly go down at Oldham. They should all regret any interference with peaceable, law-abiding Irishmen, but they would all rejoice to see Moonlighters, dynamiters, and assassins suffering the righteous penalty of the law."

He was glad to see that that received the assent of all Parties in the House; but they had had the system of Boycotting and intimidation explained by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and yet the whole force of these lay in the outrage to murder, which was not to be denounced. He considered the present Bill as the best remedial measure the Government could introduce. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) had asked how could they convict without evidence; but was it a fact that the people of Ireland would not give evidence in support of the law simply because it was an alien law? Surely the relatives and friends of the victims of murder, outrage, and Boycotting must be more than human if they did not wish to take that vengeance which the law offered them upon the authors of their misfortunes. Irish Members might say that they were too patriotic to take that revenge when the law was alien. The Irish Nationalists, of course, never dreamed of giving evidence under an alien law, or of rising the resources of an alien law against the police at Youghal or the rioters of Belfast. If it was wrong to give evidence, or do anything in support of an alien law, Irish Members—

> "Compound the sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

The hon. and learned Member for Hackney also said that the ordinary law had not been sufficiently tried. But he entirely disputed that statement, and contended that the ordinary law had been fully tried in Ireland and had failed. The hon. and learned Gentleman asked what had happened to change the situation since the noble lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) addressed his constituents two months ago. His reply was that much had happened since then. Why, since then the ordinary law had been tried and failed. That had very much changed the situation, and he thought there could be no stronger arguments in favour of the absolute necessity of some measure of this kind than that after Judges declared the Plan of Campaign to be illegal the agitation had been openly carried on, and the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) admitted that he was engaged in it, the jury failed to give a verdict; and therefore the Government were unable to obtain verdicts under the ordinary law. He was inclined to look upon the transference of prisoners from Ireland to England for trial as one of the best provisions in the Bill. It was an outward and visible sign of the union between England and Ireland. [*Laughter.*] The hon. and learned Member for Hackney could give only two precedents for this step—namely, the trial of prisoners from America during the American war, and the trial at Carlisle of Scotch prisoners after the 1745 rising. These were very unfortunate instances. In the former American Independence succeeded whereas after the latter Scotland became the most loyal and peaceable part of the United Kingdom. Nationalist Members had laughed when he said that this clause was the sign of the union between the three countries. He had been in favour of similar homogeneous and simultaneous legislation for the three countries, and he regretted that it was not possible to bring in a Bill to apply to all parts of the United Kingdom, the powers of which would be put in force in any part of the country by proclamation as the necessity arose. The Bill had been described as a Coercion Bill for ever and ever, but its provisions would only be applied in proclaimed districts. The districts that were not proclaimed would remain in the same state as ever. The hon. Member for East Bristol (Mr. Handel Cossham) had asked how the Liberal Unionists were going to vote for this, and had said that the good Liberal parrot had been taught bad language and to swear, by the naughty Conservative parrot; but the conduct of Irish Members was enough to make a saint, not to say a parrot, swear. It was said that Boycotting and intimidation existed in England. Was there ever a greater *reductio ad absurdum* than that? He would admit for the sake of argument that there might be exclusive dealing, and Boycotting in England by the Tory Press and the Primrose League; but nobody ever heard of the editor of a Tory newspaper or the dame of a Primrose League resorting to outrage to enforce the Boycotting. Did anyone ever hear of the dames of the Primrose League lying in wait behind hedges and ditches, and putting shots into the legs of their opponents. [*Laughter.*] The laughter with which this remark had been greeted showed the absurdity of the reasoning of hon. Gentlemen opposite, for the state of Ireland was no laughing matter. He hoped that the Government would stand firm in this matter. If they did he believed they would have the support of the country at their back. The Nationalist Party reminded him of the old fable of the Sphynx, a monster which had a most beautiful and fascinating head and bust; but whose trunk and legs and claws were those of a beast of prey. This monster propounded riddles and destroyed those who were unable to answer them. The Nationalist Party now had as its head the noble presence and the mighty name of the statesman who was once the idol of the English people; but its legs and its claws were to be found in the slums and dens of New York and Chicago. The riddle which it propounded was the problem of Irish Government. He hoped that there sat on the Treasury Bench the Œdipus who would answer it, and he trusted and believed that he would find an answer that would solve the difficulty. If theright hon. Gentleman did so he would soon see, like Œdipus of old, the monster dashing headlong to destruction.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said, that the previous speaker (Mr. Lea) had denied that at the last Election the Tory and Liberal Unionist Members expressed their intention of opposing any policy of coercion. Was it not a matter of public notoriety that one of their strongest arguments, and one of their strongest cards played against the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), was the declaration of their determination to oppose coercion? It was only the other night that the hon. Member for Deptford admitted that the cry of no coercion was one of the strongest points of the Tories at the last Election. He (Mr. Flynn) opposed the Bill of the Government as a wanton and uncalled-for insult to the Irish people; and, instead of being a Bill for the Amendment of the Criminal Law, as described by the Government, it was a Bill to facilitate the collection of unjust rents, for the suppression of Constitutional agitation, and for filching away public rights. The arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, instead of proving that coercion was necessary, had an exactly opposite effect. How could it be maintained, when there had only been six more outrages in 1886 than in 1885, and when the difference in the number of Boycotted persons was so slight—how could it be maintained that there existed sufficient grounds for the introduction of repressive measures? The Chief Secretary had quoted the charges of certain Judges, including that delivered by Mr. Justice O'Brien at the last Cork Assizes. But that charge had been torn to shreds. The language of Judge O'Brien was the language of a political and heated partizan—the language of a renegade Home Ruler. History told them that no men were more bitter against Members and Parties than those who had turned their backs upon them. In that House did not the spectacle of the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman), and, in Ireland, the spectacle of Judge O'Brien, show that a renegade from principle was the most bitter and persistent opponent?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I rise to Order, Mr. Deputy Speaker; and I desire to ask you, Sir, whether the hon. Member is in Order in attacking the character of a Judge of the High Court? The hon. Member has accused Judge O'Brien with being a violent political partizan and a renegade from political principles.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The expression is quite out of Order, and the hon. Member must withdraw it.

MR. FLYNN said, he would withdraw anything that was ruled to be out of Order. He would, therefore, withdraw this expression; but he must say, in doing so, that similar words had been used several times in the course of the debate. He merely wished to show that the learned Judge went beyond the facts that were before him. The people of Cork knew exactly how to appraise the value of that charge. The calendar before the Judge was an extremely light one, and the figures which he paraded were the offspring of his heated imagination. The County of Cork was in a peaceful condition. There was very little ordinary crime, and the agrarian crime was not sufficient to justify the learned Judge's remarks. In the city of Cork, or Dublin, or Waterford, or Limerick, or any other city in Ireland, life and property were more secure at the present moment than in that Metropolis; and in the County of Cork, to which the learned Judge referred, there was as little crime as in Surrey or Middlesex. Only the day before yesterday, the Chairman at Macroom Quarter Sessions was presented with a pair of white gloves; and the foreman of the Grand Jury asked the Chairman to send to the Chief Secretary a resolution which they had passed, asking the Government to exempt that portion of the county from the operation of the Act, and protesting against the measure as unnecessary and uncalled for. There was nothing to justify such unfounded libels on the character of the people as were contained in this charge.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, that the hon. Member must not use language of that kind with reference to a Judge.

MR. FLYNN, resuming, argued that the real object of the measure before the House was to suppress the agrarian combination in Ireland against rack-rents. The Government declared that they wished to remove all obstructions in the way of their remedial legislation. What could they mean by that, except that it was their intention to prevent popular criticism of their measures, wherever such criticism should take the form of organized agitation? The Government accused the Party to which he belonged of having thrown difficulties in the way of the application of Lord Ashbourne's Act. If that course had been taken, it was because they wished to frustrate the attempt of the landlords to force the Act upon their tenants. Under the pressure of their arrears due, deliberate attempts were made by landlords and agents to force the tenants to purchase at the landlords' valuation. The National League advised the tenants not to purchase under such conditions. That those attempts were made was clearly proved by the evidence of Mr. J. G. M'Carthy in the 2,209th and subsequent questions put by the Cowper Commission. When, therefore, the Government spoke of the necessity of putting down the National League, their real aim was to bolster up the landlords' interest—an interest which was falling in consequence of the depreciation in the value of produce. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer contended that the object of the League was to render nugatory the remedial measures of the Government, and that the Government wanted to prepare the ground by this Bill for these measures. Thus the people of Ireland were to be coerced into accepting these remedial measures, whether they liked them or not. As to the Cowper Commission, which had been so much referred to, it ought not to be forgotten that the Commission was appointed by the Government and was a landlords' Commission; and also that the vast body of the evidence was given by landlords and land agents and those Boycotted persons who had every reason to be bitter and hostile to the National Party. With the exception of a few merchants, no Members of the National Party appeared before the Commission. The Commission was marked from beginning to end with the landlords' sign and seal. The only popular Member of the Commission, Mr. Knipe, was selected because he was a

Liberal Unionist, and his Report was the only really valuable result of the Commission. But were the Government going to act upon the recommendations of the Report, even excluding Mr. Knipe's suggestions? Were they going to act upon that part of the Report which showed the impossibility of the tenants paying their present rents? Mr. Knipe's Report pointed out that evictions were going on because of rack-rents, not only in the South and West, but also in Ulster itself; and he utterly condemned all proposals for coercion. If the Government had put a stop to unjust evictions, there would have been no more turmoil and no pretext or necessity for a Coercion Act at all. The Plan of Campaign was a combination of tenants, acting within the law, for the purpose of obtaining reduction of excessive rents; and, when the landlord was willing to meet the tenants fairly, no further difficulty was experienced. Boycotting was, at present, a desperate expedient; but, if the Bill passed, it would become a political and patriotic duty in the eyes of the Irish people. A great deal had been said about the tyranny of the National League. The power of the National League sprang from popular support, popular opinion, and popular favour, and it was ludicrous to hear the statement that the people of Ireland only wanted a kind and paternal Government to get them to throw off the tyrannous code of the League. The National League was an open association, all of whose proceedings were public, and exercised a restraining influence upon popular agitation. He belonged himself to the League, the operations of which had been most beneficial to the tenantry. Much had been said on the Benches opposite about the Ten Commandments; but the people of Ireland would take no lessons in morality from them. The law did and could not command the respect of the Irish people, because it was not "broad-based on the people's will." The Leader of the Irish people (Mr. Parnell) had addressed wise words of warning, which he (Mr. Flynn) hoped and believed his countrymen would take to heart. That Bill would only meet with the contempt of the Irish people, who, however, not from respect to the Bill, but in obedience to the voice of their Leader, would exercise self-restraint. The Government declared that the preservation of law and order was the object of the Bill; but it would have a contrary effect. It would never receive the respect of the people, and they would break it whenever they could do so with safety and impunity. Nevertheless, the people would follow the advice of their Leader, the hon. Member for Cork. They would abstain from crime, and look forward to the near future when the noble programme of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian would be adopted by the country, and when they would be able to bid a long farewell to all these coercive measures, and enter on a career of peace and happiness and prosperity.

Mr. JARVIS (Lynn Regis): I desire to solicit the kind indulgence usually accorded to a Member who addresses the House for the first time. The question before us is a very simple one, and one which has been discussed over and over again—namely, whether law and order is to prevail within the Queen's Dominions, and crime and outrage, confusion and anarchy, should be suppressed? I read the other day a speech made by the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), delivered in this House on April 9 last year. Speaking of coercion, he said—

> "I think it is necessary that we should clear our ideas a little on this subject of coercion. We have accepted far too readily the term 'coercion,' which has been applied to it by its opponents, and which has been generally interpreted as a sort of synonym for tyranny. What, Sir, is the reason? Why is it that powers in excess of those of the ordinary law have had very generally to be conferred upon the Executive in Ireland? It is because the ordinary law has not received that ready and willing assent from the people of Ireland that it receives in the remaining parts of the Kingdom."—(3 *Hansard*, [304] 1262.)

Why is it that the law does not receive in Ireland that ready and willing assent which it receives in other parts of the Kingdom? On this point I should like to refer hon. Gentlemen opposite to an authority they are very fond of quoting—the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller before the Cowper Commission. Sir Redvers Buller, after saying that intimidation was rampant in Ireland, and that the people of Ireland, if left to themselves, were very well intentioned, was asked whether the people were prevented from paying their rents partly by terrorism and partly by real inability and poverty, and the answer was—

> "Yes, and partly by bad advice; this *United Ireland* scheme, and that sort of thing. The three worst districts that I have got, and which I really thought were settling down, Mr. Dillon and other M.P.'s have just been preaching in, and the excitement they have created will, I fear, again disturb them."

That, to my mind, is the cause of the agitation which is a curse to Ireland. To my mind—and I am supported in my belief by the evidence of General Buller—the people of Ireland, if freed from that curse, will be as loyal, faithful, and law-abiding subjects as are to be found in the realm. It is not that the people are unwilling to obey the law, for Sir Redvers said that it was their desire to do so. Then I contend that the strength of the law ought to be felt by those who desire to subvert it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has told us that—

> "If the law be one that works injustice, it is not the first duty of a civilized society to enforce that law."

But who is to be the authority as to the justness of the law? Is it the right hon. Gentleman himself, or are we to consider the general sense of the country? I would ask whether it is to be the law of this country or that of Chicago which is to prevail? Is the Imperial Parliament to rule this United Kingdom, or is it to be governed by the Convention of Chicago which met last August, and which has for its mottoes "Home Rule or else ——." "Peaceably if we can, otherwise if we must?" I would ask the right hon. Member for Derby whether he will consider it a just law which hands over the loyal minority in Ireland to men some of whom are bound by an oath to render the government of Ireland by this country an impossibility. Hon. Members opposite tell us that the Plan of Campaign originated with the tenants. But the House knows that it was devised and hatched by the accredited agents of the National League at the Chicago Convention. The hon. Member for East Fife (Mr. Asquith) said that hon. Members on the Government side of the House are very fond of raking up the stale gossip of the drinking saloons of Chicago and New York. Very likely the principles of the Plan of Campaign originated in such places, but they are no longer stale gossip; they are now accomplished facts. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) said that he was not responsible for the Plan of Campaign; but it is of little use for him to say so when it was prepared by his associates. If he desired to repudiate responsibility for it, why did he not rise in his place and denounce it? We have listened to the hon. Member on many occasions during the present Session; but he has never given any hint of his intention to repudiate the action of his agents. If he disapproves of it, why does he not exercise some of the influence he possesses over his myrmidons? Is he actuated by the policy of fear, and is he being driven on his downward path at such a rapid rate that, though he would stop if he could, the force is too strong for him? The National League found it expedient to adopt some such measure as the Plan of Campaign, because last autumn there was a sense of growing security among the people of Ireland, in consequence of the accession to power of Lord Salisbury's Government; because they knew that the Conservative Party had promised before the constituencies to maintain law and order in that country. Mr. John Newman, when examined before Lord Cowper's Commission, said that he had got his rents better in 1886 than in the previous year, and he added—

> "I think the reason for this is because the present Government is in power, and the people consider that they would support law and order, and they are, therefore, more inclined to pay."

He went on to say that he had given in that year the same abatements of rent as in the previous year; but they paid him more cheerfully in 1886, although that was a worse year than 1885. He said, further, that all those tenants who had not paid were, he thought, still under the influence of the League. If the hon. Member for Cork will not denounce the Plan of Plunder, I will appeal to the new Leaders of the Party—the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—to express their opinions upon it. We have waited in vain so far for any such expression of opinion. The right hon. Member for Derby has on one occasion promised that he will give an opinion before he sat down; but, although the House anxiously listened for it, none was forthcoming. All we gathered from that speech was that it is just as legal for the tenants to refuse to fulfil their just contracts as it was for John Hampden, 250 years ago, to refuse the payment of ship money. The right hon. Gentleman must remember that that was because Hampden considered it an infringement of the Petition of Right, and, therefore, he refused payment on the ground of principle; but will any hon. Gentleman say that when persons have entered into a contract, the whole thing shall be at an end because one of the parties said fulfilment will be a breach of principle? If that plan is not to be denounced by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and the right hon. Member for Derby, I think it will be only fair to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley), because I find that in answer to a question—when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland—the right hon. Gentleman said that the law of conspiracy was already wide enough to deal with the cases of illegal combination which had been established. The right hon. Gentleman has therefore a desire that illegal combinations shall be dealt with and the law maintained; but surely it is not consistent with that desire that the right hon. Gentleman should deliver speeches which are calculated to excite the people, such as the words he addressed not long ago to the Radical Union. On that occasion he spoke of large crowds assembling to see the prisoners leave Ireland and arrive in England, when brought over for trial under the change of venue clauses in the new Bill. When it is remembered that the prisoners who would be brought to this country would be those only who were accused of the worst classes of crime such as murder, I do not anticipate that the people of England would rush to welcome them. Charges have lately been made against hon. Gentleman opposite who claimed to be the Representatives of the Irish people. There are those who believe—and I number myself among them—that if it were not for the agitation I have referred to some of those hon. Gentleman would not be in the position which they now occupy. If the statements which have been made in this House, and in the public Press, are untrue, I ask hon. Gentleman opposite to rise in their places and deny them. I should like to hear hon. Gentleman opposite repudiate any connection with the practices of murder and assassination in America. We have been led to believe that from that country came the subsidies which enable hon. Members opposite to carry on that accursed war. I would ask, is it to promote such an alliance that right hon. Gentlemen opposite give their support? The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has acknowledged in the fullest degree the alliance of the Separatist Leaders with the Nationalist Party. Everyone knows that those who pay the piper have the right to call for the tune. We know that the Nationalist Party in Ireland depend for their support upon the Fenian element in America, and we find that the Separatist Party in this House depend for support on the votes of the Nationalist Party. I will not follow the argument any further; the slightest knowledge of the elementary principles of Euclid will, I think, readily supply the *a fortiori* deduction. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has compared the state of affairs in Parliament to a railway on which a permanent way is blocked. Does the right hon. Gentleman ever consider who was the pointsman in the box who turned the Parliamentary train on the wrong line of metals, and caused the accident he has described? Are we to suppose that the right hon. Gentleman who caused the accident will continue to denounce the action of the Party of which he is now the Leader in preventing the clearance of that obstruction? We, on this side of the House, and many on the other side, are determined to assist the Government by every means in our power to clear away that obstruction. We know it has been laid down by the hon. Member for North Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond) that "It will remain for the Irish people to prove that as slaves we can be formidable foes."

Mr. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): I am sure the hon. Member does not mean to misrepresent me; but I object to isolated and disjointed portions of my speech being quoted apart from the context.

Mr. JARVIS: At any rate, the sentence I was about to quote is not disjointed, and upon that I would found my argument. The hon. Member said that he believed it the duty of himself and his Friends to make the government of Ireland by England impossible. I should be pleased if the hon. Member can repudiate that statement.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND: I only objected to its being quoted apart from the context.

Mr. JARVIS: We on this side of the House have been returned by the people of this country to defend the Union, and we are determined to march straight on behind the Government, undeterred by the utterances of the hon. Member for Wexford at the Chicago Convention, and undeterred by the allusions of the hon. Member for Cork to explosions and dynamite. In refusing to believe in the policy of fear, but supporting the Government to the best of our ability, we feel confident that we are only fulfilling the pledges which we have made to our constituencies, and that we shall be supported by the approving voices of our fellow-countrymen.

Mr. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham) said, he hoped that a Member who had not yet said anything at all in the House on the Irish Question, either this year or last year, might not be considered obstructive in saying a few words at this time on the very grave issues which were now before the country. It appeared to him that there were two sets of arguments that had been most largely brought forward in support of the Coercion Bill of the Government. The first were those which gave facts, and showed in what a disastrous condition Ireland was at the present time. The second were those which were quoted from the former speeches of Liberal Leaders, and showing that they had changed their policy. With reference to the latter class of arguments, he could only say it seemed to him that they had had almost enough of them, and they were not very pertinent to the issues before the House. There was no doubt whatever that the Liberal Leaders had changed their minds, because they said the old and disastrous policy had, in their opinion, gone on long enough, and it was time that they should have some totally new departure. With reference to the first class of argument, he would say for himself that, even if he admitted all that was said—if he admitted the most disastrous and most melancholy condition of Ireland—it seemed to him that there was something which went even deeper than that. They had to consider whether the Government had the power which they claimed to have of carrying out their proposed policy. The Government were determined, as some of their supporters said, to emancipate the Irish people from the tyranny which now oppressed them. Had they the power to carry out that determination? They were determined to restore justice. Could they restore justice in the proper sense of the word? They were determined to carry out the authority of the law. Upon what did the real state of the law depend? He would quote a few words of one who was by far the ablest opponent of Home Rule. Professor Dicey, in his work entitled, *England's Case against Home Rule*, said some things which he (Mr. A. H. D. Acland) thought some supporters of the Bill now before the House were sometimes forgetful of, or, at any rate they hardly laid enough stress upon them. The writer said—

> "The ultimate strength of the law lies in the sympathy, or at the lowest, in the acquiescence of the mass of the population."

Now, if the strength of the law lay in the sympathy and acquiescence of the mass of the people, it was possible that a good many of the contentions of the supporters of this Bill were not really true. He ventured to say that this measure was repugnant to the sense of justice and to the democratic principles of the English people, and that efforts to enforce justice only according to our own ideas, remained, and would remain, hateful to the Irish people. But how much longer was the present state of things to last? It was said by the authors of the present Bill, that until the agitators and demagogues were suppressed, there would be no security for law, order, life, or property. Well, that was exactly what Mr. Stanley said 55 years ago, and so they found in the matter of juries and many other similar questions that they were repeating history, repeating arguments which were half-a-century or more old, and they might fairly ask how long was this to go on? Some Members had spoken of this Bill in its connection with the Jubilee of Her Majesty's Reign. The contrast was a disastrous one. In the year 1837 there was some hope for Ireland. In that year the Lord Lieutenant was in a position of friendship with Mr. O'Connell; but many persons had reproved him for his attitude. He went about the land letting prisoners out of gaol. Now, at the end of 50 years, we saw a very different state of things. The demand which was now made was a more reasonable one than that put foward by O'Connell, and was made by a far wider and fuller representation of the Irish people. In the year 1837 Drummond was the Permanent Under Secretary for Ireland. In this year Sir Robert Hamilton, who appeared to be favourable to the case of the Irish people, had been got rid of, and sent elsewhere. Why did the policy in the first year of the Reign of the Queen, which was one of friendship towards the Irish people, and an attempt to try and understand their wishes and needs—why did that fail? Because the English people were then so full of prejudice that they could not understand that a policy of that kind could be wise; and that, more than anything else, broke down Lord Melbourne's Ministry. Now we were in a more hopeful time, and there was less prejudice. There was a better understanding of the feeling of the Irish people than there was then. There was certainly more hope that a policy like that of Drummond's would be carried out now. The argument for the Government Bill was based on what was called the "theory of agitators." The agitators were the source of all the difficulties, according to the authors of the Bill. He ventured to say they ought to know something more about the Irish people. At the present time there were two theories about the Irish people in turn trotted out by those who supported the Bill. One was that the Irish were an innocent people, who were constantly being led away by the agitators. It was said that if Parliament could only put those 85 agitators and a few of their friends in prison, then the Irish people would be amenable enough to reason and good government, and also to those who understood them better. For his own part, he doubted whether the people of Ireland would take the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) and his Friends as their trusted guides. The other theory concerning the Irish people was a totally different one. It was said they were a dynamite-loving people, that they wanted to go further than their present leaders, that if they got Home Rule they would only put up with their present leaders for a year or two, and then they would demand much more violent persons. They would want, it was said, Mr. Patrick Ford as their Prime Minister, and Mr. Egan as their Chancellor of the Exchequer. Which was the true theory of these two concerning the Irish people? His opinion was that neither was true. The fact was that the Irish were very much like other people, if they were reasonably treated. They had their virtues, and they had their faults. Unfortunately the English, in dealing with the Irish, always thought of their own virtues, and thought but little of the faults which on their side had led to so much of the disastrous history of the Irish people. Our faults had been our aristocratic pride, which made difficulties when we had to deal with other people. We believed that munificence and charity would remedy the various evils which the Irish people complained of. That theory had broken down altogether. When we had had to deal with agitators in England we had tried to understand their position, and had dealt with them reasonably. It was not so very long ago that England was considered to be in a state of almost rebellion, just as we were told that Ireland was in a state of almost rebellion now. In the Queen's Speech, in 1840, there occurred these words—

> "An unfortunate spirit of insubordination prevailed in the country, which had been repressed by the spirit and good conduct of the troops."

We should not see such a sentence as that in the Queen's Speech now, even with regard to Ireland; yet it was said of the English people a little more than 40 years ago. Lord Brougham said at the same time the masses of the English people were in all but a rebellion. But in England our reason had conquered our pride, and we had steadily made changes in the direction which the people wanted. He ventured to say that the principle underlying the two cases was the same, although there might be thousands of minor differences. Those who would carry out this policy to its ultimate conclusion ought to be glad that the old Chartists had had their way, and that the democracy had got the franchise in this country. They all knew that the present Prime Minister left the Cabinet rather than assent to the Bill which gave a large portion of the people the vote in 1867. They knew that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have nothing to do with the Bill which gave the vote to the county householders. Well, perhaps, the time would come when, in reference to Ireland, they would feel regret that either of these Reform Bills had passed, because if any change in the direction which the Liberal Party desired was made in reference to Ireland, it could only be made by the help of those who were enfranchised under the last two Reform Bills. They were told that the Home Rule cry was demoralizing, that it demoralized the House, and that it demoralized Ireland; but he (Mr. A. H. D. Acland) believed that the Government were doing more to demoralize Ireland—and to some extent even England—by their present policy than anything which was being done by the alternative policy. What was going to be done by this Bill was to force together the party of disorder and crime, and the party of Constitutional desires. They were going to try and drive these two parties together once more, when everything had of late been done, and successfully done, to gradually draw them apart, and to encourage the Irish people to look for the solution of their difficulties to Constitutional methods. The theory of putting agitators in prisons as a solution of the difficulty, by thereby giving liberty to the Irish people, was one which would hopelessly break down. If they put men like the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) in prison, there would be many who would be glad to follow him there. There would be men in towns and villages who would be taken to prison as heroes, and others would be desirous of following them; and if that went on steadily, instead of making Estimates for harbours aud canals, and so forth, the Government had better make Estimates for larger prisons. Then, in addition to that, they would nave these people who had been put in prison coming to England, where they would be welcomed as heroes. They would be welcomed on English platforms, and that was not altogether a desirable state of things. But it had happened before. There were hundreds of old working men still living in the North of England who had welcomed the Chartists after they came out of prison, because they thought those men were put in prison merely as agitators agitating for a reasonable thing. They would find the English working men taking the same view now with regard to the Irish agitators. They would consider that they were agitating for what was reasonable, that they were, for that reason, put in prison, and, therefore they would be as welcome on the English platforms as the old Chartist agitators were in days gone by. All this was a very undesirable, very disturbing, and very demoralizing state of things. Instead of carrying on this pitiable work of trying to force the people against their will, would it not be better to throw political responsibility on those persons who were now called agitators, and bring them face to face with the difficulties of governing, to make them understand how little, after all, politics could do? The root of the difficulty in the past had been ignorance on the part of the English people, and want of sympathy on their part. There was now less ignorance about the Irish Question every day. There was more sympathy between the English and Irish people growing steadily month by month. Who was that owing to? It was owing to the action which had been taken by the Party which was headed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). Lord Cornwallis said, when he was sent over to Ireland to carry out the Union—"I wish that England could make a union with the Irish nation, instead of with a party in Ireland." That had been the evil of England's policy for all this century. Every Coercion Bill had welded that policy more closely than before, and once more, instead of making union with a nation, they were going to make union with a party, and put the two peoples in a more difficult position than ever. He (Mr. A. H. D. Acland) believed a way was open to better things. As it was, we were beginning to give up talking about the "low Irish" in our large towns. We knew under what circumstances they were brought to our large towns, and what made them the low Irish. We knew it was largely our own fault that they were sent away from their own country, and brought together in our large towns. We were beginning to feel and see all this, and we were beginning to believe that there was a wiser and a stronger policy on a much surer foundation for a democratic Empire than that which was now called a firm and strong policy. The power which the Government were taking into their hands was one which could not succeed, because it exceeded the limits of the power of any Government. Would they succeed where Lord Grey and Mr. Stanley did not succeed? Would they make Ireland peaceful and happy where Lord Spencer and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had entirely failed? He did not believe for a single moment that they would. The Government wanted to restore justice. But they must restore a justice which a reasonable portion of the people—he did not mean the criminals—believed to be real justice. They must bring about law and order, which carried with them the acquiescence of the great mass of the people, or else it would not be an effective law or a successful order. He believed the verdict of history was against the success of a policy like that now before the House, and that, sooner or later, at any rate, within a few years, the verdict of the great mass of the people would be against it too.

Mr. WHITMORE (Chelsea) said, he intended to support the second reading of this Bill. He was one of those who had hoped, after the last General Election, that a Government which had received the support of both sides of the House might have been able to maintain law and order in Ireland without any alteration in the existing law. He had hoped, indeed, that the present Session might have been distinguished by some useful English domestic reforms, and therefore he approached the consideration of this Bill with real reluctance, and nothing but an absolute conviction of the necessity for such a measure would have induced him to support it. But while he deplored this necessity he could not for one moment dispute it, and the necessity was certainly not of the Government's manufacture. He would shortly express the reasons that made him think that that necessity had been proved. He thought that the number of persons in Ireland now under police protection, the number of families and individuals now being Boycotted, the proportion which the crime that was absolutely undetected bore to the crime that was committed, and the proportion of the criminals who were convicted bore to those who were not convicted, made out an amply sufficient case for increasing the stringency of the Criminal Law in that country. He confessed, however, that he was also impressed by the Report of the Cowper Commission, and likewise by the fact that when, in the summer of 1885, the Government of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) found itself face to face with a slightly diminished amount of crime, as compared with that which now existed in Ireland, the Government proposed to re-enact the provisions of a Crimes Act which were similar to those of the Bill now under discussion. Again, when the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian introduced his Home Rule Bill, he based the revolution he then asked the Liberal Party to make in its past policy on the fact that the state of social order in Ireland not only justified, but necessitated such a radical change. But the state of social order in Ireland had not improved since then. Many hon. Members seemed to think that the Criminal Law in England possessed a more than Persian immutability; but the fact was that whenever any new development of crime occurred in this country the law was speedily amended to punish it. When, for instance, there was an outbreak of "rattening" at Sheffield, and an outbreak of garrotting in London, they were followed by a speedy alteration of the Criminal Law in order adequately to meet them. Again, in 1883, when the country was terrified by the wicked uses to which explosives were put, a new Explosives Act was passed which fundamentally altered our Criminal Law, by imposing on the prisoner in future the onus of proving that he was innocently in possession of the explosive which was found in his possession. Parliament willingly acquiesced in that change, and no Englishman shouted out that they were being coerced or deprived of their liberties. They knew that the provisions of the Act would only be made applicable to criminals, who alone would suffer under it. He knew that in giving those instances he was comparing small things with great; but the underlying principle was the same in regard to them and to the present Bill. That principle was that in England, where a new offence or a new condition of crime arose which the existing law did not sufficiently meet, they altered the law so as to make adequate and certain the punishment of the perpetrators of those offences. Parliament was now asked only to do the same thing in the case of Ireland. He knew that the Bill would be stringent in its operation on criminals; but that was what they desired, and he could not see that either any innocent person would suffer under it, or that any law-abiding citizen was likely to be interfered with by it in the pursuit of his ordinary avocations. The Bill aimed at three main objects. First, it provided for a preliminary investigation, such as already existed in Scotland, and was proposed for England by the Criminal Code Commission. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) said that provision might work very well in a normal state of society, but it would work badly in an abnormal state of society. That was a strange argument, and if pushed to its logical conclusion, it came to this—that the more lawlessness there was in a community the less stringent the law ought to be. That doctrine would land them in absolute anarchy. The second provision of the Bill was the substitution of another system of trial for trial by jury. No Englishman liked to see trial by jury abolished. It worked well in this country; but after all it was only a means to an end—namely, the attainment of justice; and if trial by jury had broken down in Ireland—as by the admission of the late Attorney General it had done—they must substitute some other system for it. He had no doubt that the system to be substituted would not press hardly on accused persons. The right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) had appealed to the London Conservative Members and asked what was their opinion of the provision for the removal of trials from Ireland to this country. Well, he (Mr. Whitmore) confessed that he did not like that provision. It appeared to him as fantastic in its novelty as he feared it would prove cumbrous in its working; but, at the same time, when the Executive Government told him that the jury system had absolutely broken down in Ireland, that juries could not be got to do their work, and that the alternative system of a Commission of Judges would not answer, he was content to accept that provision. The third main object of the Bill was the suppression of Associations which promoted crime or existed for illegal objects. The provision that the Lord Lieutenant's suppressing proclamation must receive the assent of Parliament was ample security against any arbitrary abuse of this power by him. It was said that was not a remedial measure. He entirely agreed with the hon. Gentleman the Solicitor General (Sir Edward Clarke) that the antithesis set up between coercion and remedial legislation in that discussion was based on a fallacy. One of the diseases which afflicted Ireland was a state of illegality which found vent in overt crime, and the only appropriate specific for the cure of that disease was the strengthening of the Criminal Law. Therefore, those who supported that Bill were as much the supporters of remedial legislation as they would be when they supported legislation for making the cultivators the actual owners of land in Ireland. The question underlying that controversy was whether Ireland was to be governed in future by an Imperial Parliament or not, or whether that form of government was to be made impossible or not. Although he did not say that the verdict of the country at the last Election was final and irrevocable, he said it was so until another appeal was made to the country. In their recollection no more perfect issue—no issue less embarrassed by other issues—was ever put to the country than that which was put to it at the last Election; and those on his side were bound by every motive of electioneering self-interest and by their deep convictions — [*laughter*] — those hon. Gentlemen who had thrown off their old opinions as they would throw off an old suit of clothes, could hardly appreciate the depth of their opponents' convictions, which had only been heightened and deepened by all that had happened since the last Election. If hon. Gentlemen opposite thought that hon. Gentlemen on his side were going to swerve one inch from their determination or their policy, they were grievously mistaken. They were told by hon. Gentlemen opposite that Home Rule was inevitable. If that was so, hon. Members opposite would reap the poisonous fruits of the evil seed they had sown in a country from which capital shrank, from which the wealthy classes were flying, among a population debauched by agitation, obeying the law only when it happened to be agreeable, and taught to despise the distinctions between right and wrong in the prosecution of visionary national and agrarian aspirations. Their course was clear and their duty plain; they could have no part or lot with the mischievous teaching and doctrines of hon. Members opposite. They must do their best to restore law and order in Ireland. He saw the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) in his place, and he wished to have a word with him. That hon. Member threatened them with the displeasure of their constituents, but he seemed to forget that the day of small boroughs and of a restricted franchise had passed away, and that they were all Representatives of large and popular constituencies. They know the wishes of their constituents as declared at the Polls.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Come to Hyde Park on Monday.

Mr. WHITMORE said, he should be glad if the hon. Member would come with him any night to Chelsea Town Hall. The hon. Member for Northampton lived in a Radical Paradise of the past, and consoled his simple soul by declaring that Conservative Members dared not face their constituents. He (Mr. Whitmore) denied that they were afraid to face the people; they were in touch with them, and, so far as he knew, the feeling of the populace was rather one of impatience that the Government had been so long in introducing this Bill, than of indignation with them for introducing it. He hoped the Government would press on with it, not with undue haste, but with a determination that there should be no undue delay in providing for the punishment of sordid and cruel criminals, and he was convinced that they would be supported by the solid sense of the vast majority of the British people.

Mr. PAULTON (Durham, Bishop Auckland) said, that this Bill was not directed so much against crime as against political agitation. It had been urged on the other side that this Bill was only intended to punish criminals. He believed it was perfectly idle to make that assertion. Hon. Members on the Ministerial side of the House admitted that they did not like the change of venue clauses, and he quite agreed with them. After all, the Resident Magistrates in Ireland were not immaculate, and as soon as that weapon was put in their hands they would not fail to use it on those against whom they were prejudiced. An hon. Member on the other side had said that he voted for this Bill with a sick heart, and no wonder, for now the policy of the Government was stripped of its shoddy clothing of sham remedial legislation. This policy would be hateful if it stood on firm ground, but the Government were building on quicksand. He denied that there was any case whatever made out for the Bill. He remembered, during the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr A. J. Balfour), that the right hon. Gentleman was challenged to show that anyone was Boycotted for not joining the National League; and that morning, having received a pamphlet from the Loyal and Patriotic League, giving 52 cases of Boycotting, he turned with curiosity to look at this point. He found only one case, and that in Mayo, where this was alleged, and in that case what happened? The central body of the League discountenanced and disapproved any such action. He did not believe that this Bill would succeed. The Government would find that it was not strong enough, and that they would have to ask their Supporters and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain) for powers to enable them to govern Ireland by martial law. He would not refer in detail to the Bill, but would only refer to the provision by which inquiries were to be held by magistrates without any person being charged. If there was difficulty now in obtaining evidence there would be still more when this Bill was carried, for the Irish people would be thrown into such a temper that they would go to gaol, headed by their parish priests, rather than turn informers. Instead of alleviating the disaffection which now prevailed—though, as they believed, only to a limited extent; this Bill would greatly aggravate it. The real violators of law were those who sought to destroy, by permanently suspending the common law on which rested the rights and liberties of the people. The noble Viscount the Member for North Devon (Viscount Lymington)—one of the principal spokesmen of the Liberal Unionists—had declared boldly that they intended to maintain their independence. But at what cost? At the cost of sacrificing the independence and liberties of a whole people. He would venture to suggest that in future the Liberal Unionists should take for their motto, *Fiat lex, ruat justitia.* It was frequently urged that the Liberal Party had once supported a policy of coercion. But they now acknowledged the error of their ways, and he did not see why even a politician should not confess that he found himself in the wrong, and state his intention to mend his ways. The Liberal Party, he believed, had learnt a lesson since the Coercion Acts of 1881 and 1882; but the Tory Party had not yet learnt it. The Tory Party learnt slowly, and only followed in the footsteps of the Liberal Party, as they tried to prove that Conservatism was only a safe form of Radicalism; and it appeared to him that there were now very few Conservatives who believed in Conservatism. He doubted whether there was one right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench who believed in it except the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). He had the greatest possible respect for the right hon. Gentleman, but it usually happened that he was on the unpopular side. As the right hon. Gentleman now supported the Government in this measure, they had good reason to think that the advocates of the Bill were on the unpopular side. He believed that the feeling of the people was strongly against the Bill, as, since 1881 and 1882, there had been a great reaction against a coercion policy. In the North of England he might safely say that the feeling of antagonism to coercion was very strong, and that there would be a feeling of shame if this Bill, in anything like its present form, should ever disgrace the Statute Book. He hoped the discussion of the measure would be conducted without excess of warmth. Dear as Liberal Members held the liberties of the Irish people, they held fully as dear the dignity of the House of Commons, and he trusted that, in the future, their debates and proceedings would not be characterized by any of those ebullitions of Party spirit and temper, which were as painful and obnoxious to the Members of the Opposition as to any other section of the House.

Mr. A. R. D. ELLIOTT (Roxburgh) said, he felt bound to rise as one of the Liberal Unionists who was not ashamed of his Liberal Unionism. The hon. Member for East Bristol (Mr. Handel Cossham) had gone out of his way to reproach the Liberal Unionists for having united themselves with the Tory Party, because the Tory Party, he said, was always wrong and the other Party always right. He had not the honour of the acquaintance of the hon. Member, but since the hon. Member entered the House he prophesied before the last Election that the Unionists would be swept away. The hon. Gentleman assured the House at the time that the flood was rising, and that no Liberal Unionist would make his appearance in Parliament. The Unionists then had a majority of 30; but they came back after the election with more than 100. If another Dissolution came, which he professed to wish for—although they really shook in their shoes at the contemplation of it—the Party of which the hon. Member was a distinguished ornament would come back reduced in numbers to an almost ridiculous extent. He could not help thinking, in listening to the speeches of hon. Members, that their love of liberty had occasionally led them altogether away from the Bill before the House. The hon. Baronet who seconded the Amendment last night (Sir Joseph Pease) characterized it as a "bloody Bill," and the hon. Member who moved the Amendment Sir (Bernhard Samuelson) spoke as if Dublin would be placed in a similar position to what Warsaw once occupied. The hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Shirley) said the Bill was "infamous and iniquitous." One of the things which roused the indignation and holy horror of the seconder of the Amendment was the clause which provided for the secret examination of witnesses; but if the hon. Member had only read the whole clause, he would have found that the evidence thus obtained could not be used to incriminate the person giving it. The position of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) had not been shaken in the least degree as to its necessity. It had been said that the Judges in Ireland whose charges were quoted were Party politicians, and they were made out of men absolutely unfit for the position. Possibly hon. Members below the Gangway believed those statements; but when the House remembered the attacks made upon Lord Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan—men of whom the House knew something—the House might believe that, if they knew the Judges as intimately, they would find the charges equally unfounded. Lord Spencer was accused of hanging innocent men, knowing them to be innocent. He confessed the objections taken to the quoting of Judges' charges in Ireland as to the lawless state of certain parts of the country, on the ground that those learned gentlemen had gone beyond their province, and that they were partizans, had, certainly, somewhat astonished him, because exactly the same practice was followed by the Judges both in England and Scotland. Surely, the Judges in Ireland, as in England and Scotland, had a perfect right, when they went on Assize, to address the Grand Juries on the state of crime and disorder in which they found different parts of the country. It was a common practice in England, and the Irish Judges were not in the least exceeding their duty when they followed it. On the contrary, it was a public advantage that they should do so, and due weight and importance should be given to their remarks. He desired to point out, however, that the statements of the Judges adduced by the Chief Secretary had not been contradicted, or shown to be untrue. The only answer attempted to be made to them was, that other Judges had stated that other parts of the country were orderly and peaceful; but that did not in the least detract from the serious character of the statements quoted by the Chief Secretary. But the case of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary did not rest solely on the charges of the Judges. That was a very important part of the case, and one which had been absolutely and entirely uncontradicted. He thought the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary was right in giving the House samples of the information which had been communicated to him as to the condition of lawlessness in Ireland; and he was equally right in withholding names, dates, and places. But the Chief Secrecretary further relied on the evidence and report of the Cowper Commission; and he had cited instances of Boycotting commands issued by the National League contained in a single number of *United Ireland.* No Member had impugned this, or declared that that copy was not a fair sample of the newspaper. The case for the Bill rested not so much upon the excess of the criminal statistics as upon what one of the Judges described as a "paralysis of the law." When the citizens of Ireland did not enjoy their ordinary legal rights, it could not be said that was a satisfactory condition of things, or one which could be allowed to go on. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) said there was no particular crime in his constituency, that the Plan of Campaign was thoroughly established, and everything was peaceful; but he maintained that the law ought to be observed in East Mayo as in other places, and it was no answer to say that where Mr. Parnell and his Friends had everything their own way there was no excess of crime. The same sort of argument was put forward by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who said if the Government wanted to put down crime they must get the Nationalist Party upon their side; but he maintained that the punishment of criminals should not depend upon the will of the leaders of the National Party. The hon. Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane) put in a more clear form the proposition which the late Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) stated last night. The right hon. Gentleman was a powerful and skilful advocate, and did not put things in the same crude and almost brutal manner as the Member for Haddington. The hon. Member said that the National League was *de facto* the Government of Ireland, and that they wanted to make it *de jure* also. He had never heard a statement more coolly made than that. His position, and that of the Liberal Unionists, was that the Government throughout the whole of the United Kingdom should be that of the Queen, Lords, and Commons. He had frequently heard it asked, What would the people of England say to such a Bill as this? Well, he (Mr. A. R. D. Elliott) ventured to affirm that if, for instance, in Lancashire a condition of lawlessness prevailed such as existed in Ireland it would not last for two months; and if any of the Lancashire Members should stand in the way of remedying the evil they would be out-voted by 10 to one. The other day they were treated to charges of jury-packing in Ireland, and they had had positive statements by persons in high places, like the Archbishop of Dublin, that juries had been packed. [An hon. MEMBER: Hear, hear!] Well they would judge of that, but he remembered that some 10 or 12 years ago, when two English Members of Parliament ventured to suggest that the defendant in the Tichborne trial then pending, would not get a fair trial in the Queen's Bench on the charge of perjury; although nothing was done in this House about it, the Lord Chief Justice of England at once had these hon. Members brought before him, made them make a most abject apology, and said, that unless they did so they would have to pay £100 and go to prison. That was the way in which such contempt of Court was dealt with in England. If such language had been used in England as had lately been used in Ireland by the Archbishop of Dublin and others, the persons using it would assuredly have been brought before the Law Courts. That was only one instance of the way in which law and regulations were steadily set at naught in Ireland. The claim that now seemed to have been set up was a claim for Irishmen of absolute impunity from law, but that was a claim which no one could admit. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) were again sitting on that—the Front Ministerial—Bench, he would still find that the obligation, however disagreeable, which had weighed upon him in the past to maintain law and order would still weigh upon him, and that he would not be able to retain his place for a day, except on the condition of enabling law and order to prevail in Ireland. He would now return to the Bill itself, and he would say that, in the main, it was a Procedure Bill. He failed to see that it made Irishmen punishable for that for which an Englishman in England, or a Scotsman in Scotland, would not be punished. Hon. Members said they wanted liberty. What was it that this Bill checked them doing which Englishmen and Scotsmen were allowed to do? As a Scotsman and a Scottish Member, he might not perhaps look at these matters in exactly the same way as the Irish Members looked at them; but how could Irish Members look at this Bill as an insult to their nation when a short time ago they welcomed with enthusiasm a Bill which would have deprived them of some of the highest rights of British citizens—which would have prevented them taking any part in the higher interests of the British nation, and which would have severed them from all dealing in the position of the British Empire throughout the world. That Bill was one which, if it had been offered to Scotland, every true Scotsman would have repudiated as a national insult. He did not know that he needed to say that in every respect, and in every detail, the present Bill was an unimproveable measure; but he was dealing with it broadly—with its main objects and provisions. He should think that in Committee the Government would themselves wish that the measure should be fairly considered, to see whether it could not be improved, and whether the same ends could not be achieved by some alterations of detail here and there. As to the duration of the measure, some hard things had been said about that; but he could only say that he hoped the Government would be very firm on that point, and retain that provision, so as to avoid the necessity of subsequently having recourse to exceptional treatment. Then there were the clauses as to summary trial. Now, if any better tribunal than the Resident Magistrates could be suggested, so much the better; but so far as the discussion had gone there had been none better suggested. As to the provision for special juries, that also, in his opinion, was reasonable. In Scotland every criminal jury was partly of special and partly of common jurors. Then there was the provision for examination of witnesses before a person was charged. Now, he would ask hon. Members to consider what that meant? In every Coroner's inquest in England it was the rule that persons were compelled to give evidence. In Scotland it went further, because the inquiry took place in private, and not merely were witnesses examined, but the person charged was examined before the Sheriff, and the examination was made for the purpose of getting evidence against him for employing his own evidence against him; which last was not to be allowed by this Bill. It was only part of a perfectly reasonable and fair criminal procedure. He did not think any great objection need be taken to the change of venue from one part of Ireland to another. That existed in England, where persons could be tried at the Old Bailey from other districts, and in Scotland, where the venue could be changed at the discretion of the Lord Advocate. Taking these facts into consideration, he thought it high time that hon. Members below the Gangway should cease to compare the introduction of a system of preliminary investigation into crime in Ireland to the establishing of the Spanish Inquisition. Such exaggerated language ought really to be discontinued. But then there came a provision as to which he was inclined to differ from the Government—until, at all events, he heard further their case for it—the provision for changing the venue from Ireland to England.

An hon. MEMBER: That is the best part of the Bill.

MR. A. R. D. ELLIOTT said, that no doubt those who wished to make the Bill a failure, and were only anxious to use it as an instrument for agitation, might wish to keep this provision; but for his part he thought it might be possible to secure the desired result by another method. They might, for instance, adopt the plan contained in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), of abolishing trial by jury for this class of offences, and substituting trial by a Commission of Judges; or they might follow the practice of the law in Scotland, and enable a bare majority of the jury to give a verdict. He would suggest whether it would not be possible to combine the two systems of trial by Special Commission of Judges, and yet retain the jury system. It might be enacted that where an Irish jury could not agree to a verdict, the trial should then take place before a tribunal of Judges. In that way the right of Irish juries to acquit prisoners would be altogether preserved. He merely threw out this as a suggestion, although these matters would be better dealt with in Committee. There was another point which he would ask the Government to consider, and it was whether, in the matter of the special proclamation, there would be any possibility of getting at the same result in a somewhat more satisfactory form? Would it not be possible to define by Act of Parliament what associations should be illegal and dangerous? The method under this Bill was rather too like the declaration of what was crime by Order in Council than by Act of Parliament. But, after all, the real opposition to the Bill was found in this, that a certain Party in this House wished to show that the Government of Ireland by the Parliament of the United Kingdom was an impossibility. It was said that those who had held offices of authority and had had experience in Ireland had come to the conclusion that the National League must be trusted to govern that country. He was astonished to hear hon. Members say that the experience as Chief Secretaries of his right hon. Friends the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) and the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) had brought them to that conclusion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne did not become a Home Ruler because of his position as Chief Secretary. He had become Chief Secretary because he had been a Home Ruler. It was in consequence of his previous theories on the subject that he was made Chief Secretary, and not in consequence of any practical experience he had had. Now, his right hon. Friend the Member for the Stirling Burghs was not a political theorist; but he had had an Irish experience at an important and critical time—at a time when the country was looking forward to a General Election, with an almost certainty that the hon. Member for Cork would return with a following of 86 Members. His right hon. Friend came to Scotland after he had gained his experience of Ireland, and when he was out of Office, to tell them the result of his practical experience in governing Ireland. He told the people of Scotland, looking especially forward to the state of things that would happen, and to the 86 Parnellite Members, that no Party, Whig or Tory, would ever go in for anything like Parnellite Home Rule, because to do so would be inconsistent with the integrity of the Empire, and inconsistent even with his duty to the Crown. The practical experience, then, of his right hon. Friends had nothing whatever to do with bringing them round to the conclusion they had now reached. [An hon. Member: Lord Spencer.] He (Mr. A. R. D. Elliott) wished Earl Spencer was a Member of that House, because in his speeches elsewhere he could see no justification for the views which his Lordship at present held. He had been much struck with the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) the other night, in which he said, that rather than such a Bill would pass he would, if the Irish people were willing, lead them in battle. He could not understand that language in any other way than this, that if the hon. Member had the power he would rather have civil war than the acceptance of this Bill. The hon. Member simply used violent language, and they might disregard it. But the House should remember that were the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian adopted, the hon. Member might be the head of a powerful Executive, the two nations would be facing each other, and such language would mean civil war. To those who said that Liberal Unionists had a special responsibility in supporting the Government at this time, he would reply that there was not a Liberal Unionist who flinched from that responsibility. Their feeling was that they would not be justified in keeping the present Government in Office for a week if the Government had allowed lawlessness and disorder to go on unchecked in Ireland. Everybody must admit, that while the Government of that country remained with the Government of the United Kingdom, they were bound to take every step they could to secure the observances of law and justice. There seemed to be a feeling growing up in the Liberal Party as to whether or not the majority of the United Kingdom were to rule the United Kingdom. If the majority of the House of Commons were not to rule, who were to rule? While the present Government was kept in Office, the responsibility of ruling must rest with them, and with nobody else, and it was neither right nor just that if they were to be made responsible they should not be entitled to conduct the affairs of the country in the way they thought best. When the Bill was in Committee it would be the duty of all of them to consider as carefully as they could whether, subject to attaining the great object of the Bill, they might not be able to make it more workable and less calculated to irritate the just susceptibilities of the Irish people.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) said, he objected to the statement that law and order constituted the supreme need of Ireland, as justice ought to go with law and order. He was, however, as anxious as his hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh (Mr. Elliott) to maintain law and order. He candidly admitted that the present condition of Ireland was most unsatisfactory, that there was disorganization, and urgent need to take into consideration the means whereby law and order could be re-established in Ireland. But it was not enough to show that the state of Ireland was unsatisfactory to justify this Bill; it must be shown that it was more unsatisfactory than it had been before, and that the amount of crime was such as had been deemed to warrant previous coercive legislation. With regard to the charges of the Judges, they were based partly on the general impressions derived from what Judges, like other people, read in the newspapers, and partly on the reports which Judges received from the Constabulary. If those reports were produced the House would be able to see what the Judges' charges were worth. Unless the right hon. Gentleman gave that fuller information which they had so often demanded, they must continue to consider his case altogether unsubstantial. He agreed with the statement that the majority must govern; but the majority of the people of this country had not sanctioned the policy of coercion upon which the Government were now entering. His hon. Friend said—"Let us take the first step necessary for restoring order." Why, for 86 years Parliament had been endeavouring to do that. They had been practising a kind of goose-step, which had brought them no further onwards. The Government did not appear to see the evils which attached to this exceptional legislation. They regarded it as a confession that instead of a United Kingdom we had two Kingdoms, one of which we were going to treat more harshly and in a totally different fashion from the other. Indeed, hon. Members had practically discussed this question as if Ireland were a foreign country. The centre of the discussion as regarded the condition of Ireland had been the Blue Book. There was no direct or immediate knowledge on which to go; but the ignorance of English and Scotch Members on the subject, instead of making the Government more cautious, appeared to make them more bold. The less they knew about Ireland the more confident they were in proposing such legislation. What was the use of her having Representatives in Parliament if they were to be over-ruled, and their testimony and advice ignored? Hon. Members opposite were governing Ireland as if she were, not an integral and equal part, but a conquered Dependency of the United Kingdom. Perhaps he ought rather to say, a Dependency we were trying to conquer, for in reality we had never conquered Ireland. Giraldus Cambrensis recorded that a prophecy was current prior to the invasion of Henry II. that Ireland would never be conquered until a short time before the Day of Judgment; and down to the present Ireland had never been conquered in the sense of being reduced to a peaceful submission, although the attempt had been made continuously for seven centuries. The question was, would this Bill effect the desired object? Would it bring the people of Ireland into a spirit to receive the remedial measures by which it was proposed to be followed, and would it bring about such a change in the condition of things as would justify a return to the ordinary law? The term "law and order," which had been played with so much by the Government in this debate, reminded him of an anecdote told of one of Louis Napoleon's ministers, who, being engaged in composing a speech, the burden of which was the necessity for maintaining "authority," asked his secretary for a synonym for the word "authority," whose reiteration even he found tiresome. What was meant by "law and order?" It was an abstract expression. What was the concrete reality which corresponded to it? Law and order really meant to the Irish people the persons by whom the law was to be enforced. Who were those persons? First, there was the Chief Secretary, whose time was so completely occupied in dealing with Irish questions in the House of Commons that he had no leisure for anything else even in quiet times. Then there was the Lord Lieutenant, who had the doubtful advantage of being an Irish landlord, and the still more doubtful advantage of being a descendant of the Lord Castlereagh of 1798. Then there was Dublin Castle, and everybody knew what opinion had long been entertained in Ireland, and was now generally entertained in England too, about the officials of the Castle. Next, there were the Resident Magistrates, who were in many cases retired officers of the Army, and relatives, nephews, cousins, sons-in-law, of Irish landlords. Few of them possessed legal knowledge. Many of them, no doubt, were worthy men; but the landlord spirit and the military spirit which they had acquired was the very worst qualification they could possess for the post. He maintained that people of that kind were not to be trusted to exercise the exceptional powers conferred by this Bill. If they wanted to give the Bill a proper chance, they ought to send fair-minded and dispassionate Englishmen as magistrates to Ireland instead of bringing Irish prisoners to this country for trial. In reality the Resident Magistrates were not judicial persons in the English sense of the word, but were members of the Executive Government. The executive officers commanding the police, and charged with the general maintenance of order in the district, would also try the persons accused under the Bill; and thus all the functions of the police and of the magistrates would be exercised under the control of Dublin Castle. That separation of the Executive from the Judiciary, which had so long been deemed in England as essential to free government, did not exist among Irish officials. In England the independence of the judicial authority was one of the corner-stones of our freedom, for which we struggled in the 17th century, and which was secured by the Bill of Rights. This independence was the very thing the Irish Resident Magistrates did not possess. It was true that in England we allowed a certain amount of summary jurisdiction to be exercised by stipendiary magistrates; but questions involving social order, and especially questions involving political issues or raising political passions, seldom or never came before stipendiary magistrates in England, and, therefore, it was possible to allow a certain amount of discretion which it was not possible to allow in Ireland. Under this Bill magistrates in Ireland would have most important functions in political cases; and the very same principle which required that an English Judge should be independent of the Executive ought to suggest a similar independence in Ireland. There were stories current, which he believed to be well-founded, that Irish magistrates had been threatened with dismissal because they did not sufficiently attend to the pleasure of the Castle, and did not act with sufficient vigour in their judicial functions. Was this the class of men to be intrusted with the powers given by this Bill? Jurisdiction in cases of conspiracy and intimidation involved the administration of one of the most difficult and delicate branches of our Criminal Law. On this account Lord Brougham doubted whether the Coercion Bill of 1833 should be extended to such cases. It was hardly possible to imagine wider powers than it was proposed to give to these magistrates. What was called "incitement" might be found in a letter or an article in a newspaper; and almost any remark or argument upon a political question might be construed into "incitement." These offences were governed by a most difficult branch of the law, the interpretation of which required the highest faculties of trained Judges; and yet it was proposed to give these functions to almost untrained military men who were generally distrusted as the friends of the landlords. Not to speak of the enormous number of offences covered by the Whiteboy Acts, the words of the present Bill covered acts precisely similar in their moral character and social consequences to acts that were legal under the Statutes affecting trade unions. Under Section 2, a man might be punished with six months' hard labour for doing in an agricultural dispute exactly what the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act of 1875 declared to be legal in the case of a trade dispute between employers and workmen. The present Bill no doubt proposed to except from its operation those things which were declared to be legal by the Trade Unions Acts. But why did it not except combinations which were morally undistinguishable from those legalized by the Act of 1875, differing only in that they arose between a landlord and his tenants? He would go into the matter in detail, if necessary, at a later stage; but the fact that the question was raised showed that the Bill involved issues which it would require the largest measure of legal knowledge and skill in a Judge to determine. It was, therefore, a dangerous experiment to intrust the determination of these questions to Resident Magistrates. He hoped that in Committee the Government would assent to considerable modifications of some of the clauses, with a view of removing the danger to which he had adverted. Further, it was a startling proposition that the Lord Lieutenant should have power to declare an association illegal. If it was desired to deal with the National League why not at once pass an Act to declare it illegal? Of course, that would impose upon the Government the obligation of making out a case against it in that House. It was to obviate this necessity that the matter was to be left to the Lord Lieutenant. If associations were to be declared illegal they ought to begin with the Orange Society, which was more responsible than any other for the past misfortunes of Ireland. They might also be fairly asked to proclaim the Primrose League, which achieved its objects largely by intimidation. [*Laughter and cheers.*] He could assure them that under the Government Bill it would be just as easy to prove that the Primrose League was a body which existed for the purpose of intimidation, and accomplished its object by these means, as it would be to prove that the National League was an association of the same character. He did not believe that the transfer of cases from Ireland to England was desired to have the effect of obtaining unjust convictions. Indeed, if he were an Irish prisoner, he would rather be tried by a jury in Liverpool or London than by one of the packed juries in Dublin, or by an Orange jury in Belfast. An Irishman brought to England would get a perfectly fair trial. Nevertheless, he thought this proposal of the Bill was one of the most foolish—or to adopt a word used by the Chief Secretary—one of the most "mad" proposals ever made to the House of Commons. Let them consider what the effect of this provision would be. It would attach sympathy to persons accused of serious crimes in Ireland, and would elevate mere ordinary criminals into martyrs. It would destroy all confidence in the justice of a conviction, and make the administration of the law less than ever trusted. No provision in the Bill was likely to work worse than this, and it seemed, indeed, too much even for the Supporters of the Government, such as the hon. Members for Chelsea and Roxburghshire. At the same time, he agreed with hon. Members below the Gangway that in one sense this was the best part of the Bill. It was the best evidence of the way in which the Bill was drawn, and the wisdom and judgment that presided over its inception. A Ministry that could make a proposition like that stood self-condemned before the country. He had been asked whether it was his belief that under the Bill the innocent would suffer, and whether their object was to secure immunity for criminals. His answer was that a Bill of this kind, giving large indefinite powers to many inexperienced and prejudiced men, would, without their being intentionally unjust or morally conscious of injustice, lead in practice to unfair and mistaken convictions. There would be a great tendency under this Bill for the magistrates, who were men with all the prejudices of their class, to accept insufficient evidence, and that would tell very hardly on persons whom they considered suspected characters. He believed, in point of fact, that under the Bill people would be found guilty of offences which they had not committed. If a prisoner was condemned for an offence he had not committed and the whole countryside knew it, even if he were a man of bad character, all confidence in the administration of justice would be destroyed. They believed that it was the wish of the Government, and even of the magistrates themselves, to convict none but guilty persons; but there was considerable chance that injustice would be done. In his opinion, if there was a good Executive in Ireland, Coercion Bills would be unnecessary; as things were, the Irish Executive could only govern by a state of siege, and had become accustomed to deem the ordinary law insufficient. There was one famous Under-Secretary, Thomas Drummond, who had governed with the ordinary law, refusing to use the powers which a Coercion Act, then in force, put at his disposal. Ireland had never since the Union been so loyal, contented, and peaceful as under his firm but kind hand, and his name was still remembered with affection by the people. He (Mr. Bryce) maintained that half the crimes which, according to the Government, now went unpunished, could be punished by the operation of the ordinary law if properly put in force, and that the other half would not be detected or punished even under this Bill. If there was anything that the experience of the past 86 might have taught, it was that coercion was useless for the effecting of any permanent improvement, and was only the resource of an ignorant majority and an incompetent Executive. With respect to the jury system, it was a significant fact that it had failed in Ireland. It was one of three warnings which the Irish people had given as to the failure of our system of government in their country. The first was that the people resisted the law; the second that jurors would not convict; and the third that the Irish people now returned Representatives five-sixths of whom were opposed to the present system of government. Unless the real causes of the present state of Ireland was recognized, and remedially dealt with, Her Majesty's Government would find themselves fighting against a whole nation. The Roman Catholic Church, which had never before taken part in any struggle in which its own interests were not involved, was now resisting the Government. By the course they were now pursuing, the Government were, however unconscious they might be of the fact, bringing the country nearer to Home Rule. By showing that there was no third course, that there was no alternative between Home Rule and a coercive policy, the Government was doing its best to force on Home Rule. When the country was tired of coercion and tired of the present Government, it would repudiate coercion and would see that there was no course left open but the adoption of Home Rule. The position had become a very grave one. Nothing now stood between the policy of the Government and civil war except the attitude of the Liberal Party. It was the friendly attitude of the Liberal Party and the promise of help and relief which the Liberal Party held out to the Irish people that—in spite of the folly of the Government—had told and would tell upon the minds of the Irish people. They did their best to encourage the Irish people to repress any tendency to outrage, and to wait patiently for the advent of a better day. They would encourage them to disregard the provocation to outrage, which the policy of the Government had given, and they would endeavour to save those in Ireland whom the Party opposite was misguided enough to believe that they were defending from the consequences of this blind and fatal measure.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Holmes,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

CHURCH SITES (COMPULSORY POWERS REPEAL) BILL.—[Bill 53.]

(*Mr. Francis Powell, Mr. John Talbot, Mr. Addison, Mr. Tomlinson.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, the Bill was very simple, and for the purpose of repealing an Act giving the Church of England power to acquire sites for churches and burial grounds compulsorily, which had only been put in force once. The Act was not required by the Church, and as it was considered a grievance by Nonconformists it was desired to repeal it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. F. S. Powell.*)

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) said, that apart altogether from the merits of the Bill, it ought not, in his opinion, to be proposed at the end of the Sitting. He did not think that the objects of the Bill had been sufficiently explained.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTION.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to amend the Public Libraries Acts, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Arthur Cohen, Mr. Collings, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, and Sir Lyon Playfair.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 220.]

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 7th April, 1887.

The House met at Two of the clock.

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

The House being met, the Clerk at the Table again informed the House of the continued indisposition of Mr. Speaker, and of his unavoidable absence from the House this day.

Whereupon Mr. Courtney, the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, proceeded to the Table as Deputy Speaker, and, after Prayers, counted the House, and, Forty Members being present, took the Chair, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 20th day of July 1855.

PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Public Petitions have leave to sit this day, notwithstanding the sitting or the Adjournment of the House.—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY BILL.

CONSIDERATION.

Order of Consideration, as amended, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now considered."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): It is my duty to oppose this Bill.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then, in that case, the further consideration must stand over till Tuesday next.

Consideration *deferred* till *Tuesday* next.

QUESTIONS.

INLAND REVENUE (IRELAND) — REMOVAL OF OFFICER FROM BANTRY TO SKIBBEREEN.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) (for Mr. Gilhooly) (Cork, W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether the officer of Inland Revenue stationed at present in Bantry is to be removed, and the duties which he now performs are to be executed by the Inland Revenue officer stationed at Skibbereen; whether the district in which Bantry and Castletownmere are situated extends 50 miles from Skibbereen; and, whether, considering the great inconvenience which this would involve to poor persons applying for probate of wills and letters of administration, he will reconsider the proposed change?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): The removal of the Revenue officer at Bantry is in contemplation; but no step will be taken without fully considering the requirements of the district and the convenience of the inhabitants. The districts of Bantry and Castletownmere extend from 40 to 50 miles west of Skibbereen. Inconvenience to persons seeking grants of probate is not apprehended, such cases arising in that district being inconsiderable in number.

ARMY — THE ROYAL IRISH RIFLES— REMOVAL FROM NEWTOWNARDS TO DONAGHADEE.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that a Memorial has been sent to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by the inhabitants of Newtownards, praying that the 3rd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles may not be removed from Newtownards to Donaghadee for annual training, on the ground, among others, that it would inflict "great hardship on the men, and much suffering on their wives and families;" whether a Memorial has been sent to the Lord Lieutenant, from "the inhabitants, ratepayers, and visitors of Donaghadee," requesting that this regiment of Militia be not sent there for annual training, as it would "interfere very much with Donaghadee as a watering place;" and, whether he will bring the Memorials under the notice of the Secretary of State for War before definite arrangements are made for this year's training?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): His Excellency authorizes me to say that he received the Memorials mentioned, though not in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant, and he has sent them forward for the consideration of the Commander of the Forces in Ireland.

THE IRISH LAND COURT—FAIR RENTS —CLAIMS DISMISSED.

Mr. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many claims to have a fair rent fixed have been dismissed by the Land Court, from the 136,692 that have been before the Court up to 31st January, 1887, under the Clause in the Land Act of 1881, which excludes all farms on which the improvements have been made and substantially maintained by the landlord?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The number of claims that have been dismissed is about 12.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—KIDNAPPING ON THE NIGER — NATIVE REPRISALS.

Mr. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, as it appears that the seizure by Natives of Messieurs Lander's launch was an act of reprisal for the policy of the Royal Niger Company in seizing certain children as hostages, and inasmuch as the Company has since received a Charter from Her Majesty, Her Majesty's Government will advise the Company to compensate Messieurs Lander for their loss sustained by reason of its policy; whether the Foreign Office is in possession of, or has at any time seen, the 230 Treaties referred to by him made by the Royal Niger Company with Native Chiefs, or the 37 Treaties mentioned in the Schedule to the Charter; and, if some only, of how many; whether Her Majesty's Forces are still employed in the pacification of the Niger territories; and, whether the Government will lay upon the Table any Despatches regarding the recent engagements with the Natives, and the causes which led to it?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Respecting the seizure of Mr. Lander's launch, I must refer the hon. Member to my answer of the 31st of August. The Company has since succeeded in recovering the launch and cargo, which have been restored to the owner. Her Majesty's Government see no ground for interference. The whole of the Treaties made by the Company are in the possession of the Foreign Office. The actual number is 237, including those mentioned in the Schedule. Her Majesty's Forces are not employed on the Niger. The only occasion of their employment since the grant of the Charter has been that of an expedition from Her Majesty's ship *Royalist* in December, to chastise some slave-hunting tribes on the Wari branch who had attacked one of the Company's factories, inflicting loss of life. These tribes were allied with the robber Chief who seized Mr. Lander's launch. The expedition was successful; but the affair was trifling, and there are no Papers on the subject, except, I presume, the ordinary Reports of the officer in command of Her Majesty's ship *Royalist* to his superiors.

In reply to Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E),

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said: I stated, on the 31st of August, that as soon as it was known that some children had been detained as hostages by the agents of the National African Company their attention was called to the impropriety of retaining them, and on the 13th of July the Company telegraphed to their agents to release them at once.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE: Is it not the fact that the children were not restored until seven months afterwards?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: I am not aware how long they were in fact detained.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND) — AFFRAY AT MICHELSTOWN.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that O'Neill, bailiff at Michelstown, was, on the 25th March, fined 10*s.* by Mr. R. Eaton, R.M., for having assaulted with a pike and inflicted a severe wound on the head of a deaf mute named Looby; whether he is aware that a late Attorney General directed that persons found guilty of this charge should be returned for trial to the Assizes; whether O'Neill rushed through the town of Michelstown on the fair day, 25th March, with a naked knife in his hand, and assaulted Mr. W. Casey, and whether Mr. Eaton refused informations to be sworn against O'Neill on that occasion; whether, on 12th March, O'Neill and another bailiff named Davis tried to force themselves into Mr. Casey's shop, who remonstrated with and tried to prevent them from entering, when O'Neill struck Casey with clenched fists; Casey, having retaliated, was summoned to Petty Sessions, and was fined 20*s.* and costs by Mr. Eaton, who dismissed the cross case against O'Neill; whether Mr. James Skinner was also fined in a similar sum, although he produced several witnesses to prove he had only been looking on; whether Mr. Eaton is an extensive land agent; and, whether he will inquire into the above statements regarding the judgments of Mr. Eaton, Resident Magistrate?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The necessary Report in this case has not yet been received.

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACTS—MILLSTREET, MACROOM, AND BLARNEY, CO. CORK.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) (for Dr. TANNER) (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that great difficulty is experienced in promoting the erection of labourers' cottages in the Millstreet, Macroom, and Blarney districts of the County of Cork; and, whether he will take steps to facilitate the erection of such cottages in these districts?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The Local Government Board are not aware that any special difficulty has been experienced in the erection of labourers' cottages in the Unions named. If the hon. Member will be so good as to communicate to me any reason he may have for holding a contrary opinion, I will have them fully investigated.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — ELECTION OF CORONER FOR KENNAUGHT, CO. LONDONDERRY.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) (for Mr. T. M. Healy) (Longford, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether there is a vacancy in the Coronership for the Barony of Kennaught, County Londonderry, to which an election is now pending; whether he is aware that there is only one polling place in the said barony or district—namely, at Limavady, about 16 miles from one extremity of the district and 12 miles from the other; and at the time that Limavady was fixed on as a polling place for the election of Coroner, it was also, under the old Parliamentary Franchise, the sole polling place in the said district; whether, in pursuance of the Ballot and Franchise Acts, additional polling places have been fixed at Dungiven and Ballarena in the said district; and, whether, in view of this, and the fact that the franchise qualification entitling persons to vote for a Parliamentary Representative and for that of Coroner are identical, and that if the polling places at pending election in the Barony of Kennaught be restricted to Limavady, the voters in the outlying portions of the district, amounting to at least one-half of the entire constituency, will be practically disfranchised owing to the distance they would have to travel to record their votes, steps will be taken to fix additional polling places at Dungiven and Ballarena at once, so as to be in force for the pending election of Coroner for the Barony of Kennaught, in the County of Londonderry?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that no such vacancy has as yet been notified to the Lord Chancellor. It is quite true that the qualification of voters for the election of Coroners is the same as for Parliamentary elections; but the area of representation differs, there being four Coroners and two Parliamentary Divisions. The polling places are fixed by Special Sessions, and cannot be altered except at similar Sessions, which may be held on Memorial. Such a Memorial has been received to-day, and will be duly considered.

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACTS — THE BIRR UNION.

Dr. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore) (for Mr. Molloy) (King's Co., Birr) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What has delayed the erection of labourers' cottages in the Huntstown and Shannonbridge Electoral Divisions of Birr Union, the sites selected by the Guardians being approved by the Local Government Board Inspector, the landlord, and the occupier; and, if steps will be taken to carry out the approved and unopposed scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The hon. Member appears to be under some misapprehension. The Local Government Board inform me that no improvement scheme was submitted by the Guardians of Birr Union for the erection of cottages in Huntstown Electoral Division. With regard to the other Division named, a Provisional Order confirming the scheme was made on the 24th ultimo, and will become absolute on the 24th instant.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether it is a fact that the Privy Council persistently throws out these applications at the request of the landlords, giving costs against the promoters?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, that the Privy Council in this matter was a purely judicial body.

Dr. FOX gave Notice that he would bring the conduct of the Privy Council, in connection with these schemes, under the notice of the House.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—THE ARREST OF THE REV. M. RYAN—DISMISSAL OF SUB-CONSTABLE DORNEY.

Mr. FINUCANE (Limerick, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that Sub-Constable Dorney, of Kilteely, County Limerick, who was dismissed for his refusal to aid in the arrest of Rev. M. Ryan, addressed his sergeant in the following language:—

> "I have been in the force for 12 years, during which time I have done my duty, and without a stain on my character; but when I am asked to lay hands on the priest of my

church I refuse to go any further with the English Government;"

whether his superior officer still persists in saying that Dorney is a man of indifferent character; and, if so, will he specify the acts by which he has earned such character; whether Doctor Cleary, medical officer to the Kilteely Constabulary, was ordered to inspect Dorney on the evening of his refusal as to his mental condition; and, whether the Constabulary Regulations direct that the mental condition of any policeman refusing to act shall be tested by medical examination; and, if not, why was the examination made in this case?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I have already stated, in reply to the hon. Member's former Question, what words the constable used when refusing to go on duty. They were not those mentioned in the Question. The description of the man's character as "indifferent" is fully warranted by the facts. He was three times punished for drunkenness, and upon the last occasion was warned that he was in danger of dismissal. The medical examination referred to was made by order of the local Constabulary officer in consequence of Dorney's excited appearance, and it seems to have been a very proper proceeding. The opinion given by the doctor was that though the man was excited there was nothing the matter with him.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) asked, how the constable stood on the promotion list when he resigned?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he could not give that information, but would make inquiries, if the hon. Member desired.

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ELECTION OF GUARDIANS FOR CLAPHAM PARISH.

Mr. GILLIAT (Clapham) asked the President of the Local Government Board, If he can state why the Local Government Board have refused to divide the parish of Clapham into wards for the election of Guardians of the Poor, as requested by the letters to that Board from the representative Vestry of Clapham?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's), in reply, said that representations had from time to time been made to the Local Government Board by the elected Vestry of Clapham, in favour of the division of the parish into wards, for the election of Guardians. There is, however, no case in London in which a parish with a population not exceeding that of Clapham has been so divided. In deciding not to comply with the request I have adhered to the views of my three Predecessors in the Office of President of the Board.

HARBOUR WORKS LOANS—HYPOTHECATION OF RATES.

Admiral MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the Secretary to the Local Government Board, Whether the Local Government Board will take the steps necessary to afford facilities to towns and villages in the vicinity of harbours to hypothecate their local rates as security for loans to be advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners for harbour works?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Long) (Wilts, Devizes): A Question on this subject was put to the First Lord of the Treasury on Tuesday last, and in reply he stated that the facilities referred to would probably be given by a clause in the Public Works Loan Bill.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT) — ROYAL ARSENAL, WOOLWICH (ACCOUTREMENT DEPARTMENT)—APPOINTMENT OF "VIEWERS."

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether it is a fact that, in the Accoutrement Section or Department at the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, the Inspector, three out of the seven permanent "viewers," and three out of the four temporary "viewers," come from the firm of Ross and Company, of Bermondsey, Government contractors for leather and saddlery; whether the Accoutrement Inspector does not also inspect and "pass" the saddlery; who were responsible for the appointment of these men; and, whether any steps will be taken to remedy, for the future, so apparent an evil?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. Northcote) (Exeter): I am informed that it is a fact that the Inspector of Accoutrements came from the firm of Ross and Company. He was selected from 47 applicants for the post, with the approval of the then Surveyor General, with the full knowledge that he had been employed for some years by this firm. It is not the fact that three out of seven permanent viewers, and three out of four temporary viewers, came from the firm of Ross and Company. One permanent viewer, appointed 10 years ago, came from that firm. The Inspector of Accoutrements has temporarily, while the appointment of Inspector of Saddlery has been vacant, inspected and passed new saddlery. This arrangement will now cease, as an Inspector of Saddlery has been provisionally appointed. The appointment of viewers is in the hands of the Commissary General of Ordnance, Royal Arsenal. The Inspector's appointments are approved by the Surveyor General of the Ordnance.

ADMIRALTY — SECRECY OF DESIGNS, &c.

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, To what extent, up to the present time, it has been customary, at any of the offices of the Admiralty or of Her Majesty's Dockyards, to allow designs, plans, and specifications of Her Majesty's Ships of War and of Her Majesty's Dockyards, and information generally of a more or less confidential character, to be imparted to foreigners, and to allow foreigners to make sketches of any portions of those ships, dockyards, or fortifications; and, whether, pending the issue of the Regulations to which he referred on the 5th instant, he will take steps, by printed notices or otherwise, to prevent any information of an important character being given by any Government *employé* to foreigners, except on the written authority of some senior and responsible officer?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing), in reply, said, the Question must have been put under some misapprehension. The Admiralty had never given authority to the officers of Her Majesty's Dockyards for information of a confidential character to be furnished to foreigners, or to allow them to make sketches of ships, dockyards, or fortifications. Any official so acting, without the authority of the Admiralty, would be guilty of a breach of trust, and would be liable to punishment.

Mr. Northcote

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—MACROOM QUARTER SESSIONS.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) (for Dr. Tanner) (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the County Court Judge presiding at the Quarter Sessions held in Macroom on Monday the 4th April, owing to the fact that the Criminal Calendar was blank, was presented with a pair of white gloves; whether, subsequently, the Judge refused to receive a Resolution unanimously adopted by the Grand Jury against the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill; whether the Riding in question is one of the districts the condition of which is relied on by the Government to prove the necessity for the application of the Bill; and, whether the Judge in question will be one of the Judges to hear appeals in cases under the said Act?

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the following report from *The Daily News* of the 5th instant, respecting the absence of crime in the Macroom district of the County of Cork:—

> "At the Macroom Quarter Sessions to-day there was but one criminal case before the Sessions, and this, on the application of the Crown Solicitor, was sent forward to the Cork Assizes. It was a charge preferred against a man named Buttimer, of having been one of an armed party who entered the house of a farmer named O'Keeffe, and carried away a gun, with £15 in money. The Chairman, addressing the Grand Jury, congratulated them on the peace that prevailed in the district, there being no criminal business. The Grand Jury were then discharged. The foreman said they had a Resolution which they wished to submit to his Honour, who absolutely declined to receive it. The Grand Jury, however, adopted in their room a Resolution stating that, having regard to the crimeless and peaceable condition of the district, the Grand Jurors earnestly solicited his Honour to recommend the exclusion of the Division from the provisions of the Chief Secretary's Bill;"

and, whether he will give effect to the recommendation of the Grand Jury?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I have no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the newspaper reports upon which both Questions appear to be founded; but I would observe that the absence of criminal cases from the Calendar is no satisfactory evidence of the real state of the country, as was clearly pointed out by the learned Judge when opening the recent Commission for the county in which Macroom is situated. The powers which the Government seek under the Bill now before the House will be exercised by the Executive with a due sense of the responsibility under which they act.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked, whether this County Court Judge was not a landlord himself; and, whether on recent occasions he had delivered violent harangues in favour of coercion and against Home Rule from the Bench?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask, Sir, if the learned Judge on this occasion said there was anything in the condition of the Riding to alter the conclusion which one would draw from the state of the Criminal Calendar?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware that the County Court Judge did so. But there was a very bad case of Moonlighting in that district, which was sent to the Assizes.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL—THE WHITEBOY ACTS AND LATER STATUTES.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How soon he expects to fulfil his promise to reprint and issue to Members all the Whiteboy Acts, and Acts amending the same, enumerated in the Interpretation Clause of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), and also such portions of 6 & 7 *Will.* IV., c. 13, as relates to the appointment of Resident Magistrates; and, whether he will undertake to have them distributed by such a date as will leave Members time to study them before the House is asked to come to a vote on the second reading of the Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The reprint of the Whiteboy Acts, so far as they refer to the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill, and so far as they are unrepealed, will be ready by Monday, and will be in the hands of Members early next week.

Mr. M'LAREN: I suppose that includes the 6 & 7 *Will.* IV.?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It includes everything referred to in the Crimes Bill before the House.

WEST INDIA ISLANDS—THE CATHOLIC CEMETERY OF PLYMOUTH, MONTSERRAT.

Mr. TUITE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been called to a Despatch (No. 225), from the Governor of the Leeward Islands, forwarded 15th August, 1885, to Her Majesty's Government, transmitting, at the request of the Catholic Bishop of Roseau, a copy of a Correspondence relating to the appropriation of what is known as the old Catholic cemetery of Plymouth, Montserrat, and the desecration of human remains, by the Trustees of the Anglican Church and Schools, while carrying on certain excavations connected with the enlargement of these premises; whether the same work of desecration is still being carried on with the connivance of the Local Authorities, notwithstanding the protests of the inhabitants; whether large quantities of human remains are daily carted away to the cane fields, and tombstones removed and destroyed; whether the cemetery has been used by Catholics and Europeans only, including planters, merchants, military officers, and clergy, for over 100 years, and only ceased to be used as a place of interment in the year 1838, as proved by the Register in the possession of the Bishop of Roseau; whether Mr. Attorney General Gatty examined the Register, and gave his opinion that the cemetery belongs to the Catholic congregation; whether he is aware that in 1841 the Anglican Body applied, through the Legislature of Montserrat, to Her Majesty's Government for a title to the site referred to, and that the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord John Russell, replied that the Crown could not make such a grant, as the land in question having been for a very long period in the possession of the Catholics as a place of interment, and might be claimed at any time by the person in whom the title was invested in trust for the Catholic congregation (see Despatch, No. 95, dated Downing Street 28th February, 1841); and, whether, under the circumstances, Her Majesty's Government will take steps to prevent any further appropriation of the cemetery, compel the Trustees of the Anglican Church and Schools to pay rent for the portion already appropriated, and desist from desecrating the remains, and destroying monuments contained therein?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): In 1884 and 1885 the Anglican Church, which was built in or about the year 1840 on a part of the old Roman Catholic burying ground at Plymouth, Montserrat, was enlarged. In the course of the work some human remains were disinterred, and, having been carefully kept in the church during the work, were re-interred under the new portion of the building. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Roseau complained to the Governor of the Leeward Islands of the alleged trespass on the burying ground and the interference with human remains, and the Correspondence has been transmitted to the Secretary of State. Lord Stanley of Preston considered that there was no case for the interference of the Government. No further interference with the cemetery, or with the remains interred therein, has been reported to the Secretary of State; but inquiry shall be made. I have no reason to apprehend any further appropriation of the cemetery, or desecration of the remains or destruction of monuments, is probable. In view of the doubt as to the legal title to the property, I do not see my way to instruct the Governor to demand rent from the Anglican Trustees for the site of the church.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—KILRUSH PETTY SESSIONS—DISMISSAL OF A SUMMONS.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been directed to a report in *The Kilrush Herald*, County Clare, of 2nd April, of a case in which a Constable Holmes summoned Mr. Andrew Bourke, because his hound barked at the dog of Captain Welch, the Resident Magistrate; whether Holmes so swore in Court; whether Holmes, in conjunction with Head Constable Kennedy, summoned several other inhabitants of Kilrush on the same day; whether the cases were dismissed by the other four magistrates, the Chairman (Captain Welch) alone dissenting; whether Holmes is a police recruit, and Kennedy was only recently appointed to that station; whether he is aware that these summonses have caused considerable irritation in the district; and, whether he will cause an inquiry into the circumstances of the case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): These inquiries cannot be answered without local inquiry in the County of Clare, for which no opportunity was afforded by the short Notice given of the Question.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—ASSAULT ON JOHN JOHNSTONE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that an old labourer named John Johnstone, who on the 13th of August last year, according to Commander M'Hardy's Report on the Belfast Riots, was suddenly attacked by a number of his fellow workmen (in the shipbuilding yard of Messrs. Harland and Wolff, Belfast), beaten, covered with tar, and compelled to leave the employment, after a service of 34 years, was, during and after his illness resulting from the injuries he had sustained, refused any allowance from the sick and accident fund of the establishment, to which, whilst an *employé*, he had been compelled to subscribe; whether the managers of the fund refused to furnish a copy of their Rules to Mr. M'Erlean, solicitor, who applied for them on behalf of Johnstone; and, whether the fund is subject to public authority?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I have no official information as to the fund referred to, which, so far as I can judge from the terms of the Question, appears to be one under private management.

MR. SEXTON: Might I ask, Sir, whether a sick or accident fund of this kind is not under the control of a public officer, like Friendly Societies?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should imagine not; but I have not yet received any information.

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS—THE ALL-NIGHT SITTING ON MARCH 21—EXTRA PAY TO MESSENGERS.

Sir ALGERNON BORTHWICK (Kensington, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is true that the messengers of this House were given any extra pay for the All-night Sitting on the 21st of March; and, whether the police, who served so many additional hours, have not received any special remuneration as usual on occasions of All-night Sittings; and, if so, why is there any departure from the custom?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, he was informed that the messengers engaged during the recent All-night Sitting would be granted an allowance of 5*s.* each. It was not the regular custom to grant extra remuneration to the police for extra duty; but, as he believed on two previous occasions a special allowance had been made, he would be prepared to consider any application the Commissioners of Police might address to him.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS—OUTBREAK OF ANTHRAX—COMPENSATION.

Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.) asked the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Whether, in the event of an outbreak of anthrax on any farm, and an order being given for animals to be slaughtered to prevent further spreading of the disease, the tenant will receive compensation in the same manner as in the case of foot-and-mouth disease under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act; and, whether, if no such power is in force to grant compensation, Her Majesty's Government will at once introduce a Bill to remedy such defect?

The CHANCELLOR of the DUCHY (Lord John Manners) (Leicestershire, E.): The Government do not propose to give Local Authorities power to slaughter on account of anthrax, or otherwise to deal with anthrax as with foot-and-mouth disease, which is a totally different affection. Slaughter in anthrax would be impracticable, as the animals are usually found dead, or die soon after the symptoms become apparent; and, further, as the disease does not spread by the mere association of the diseased with the healthy animals, slaughter and compensation would only be for the benefit of the owner, and not for that of the community.

Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK asked, if the noble Lord was aware that a tenant farmer in Lancashire was ordered by the Local Authorities to slaughter his animals in consequence of an outbreak of anthrax, and that he received no compensation?

Lord JOHN MANNERS: I am not aware of it.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — REMOVAL OF DR. CLARKE, OF PHILIPSTOWN, KING'S COUNTY.

Dr. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he has received a copy of a Resolution, passed unanimously by the Board of Guardians of the Tullamore Union, at their meeting on the 29th ultimo, in reference to the removal of Dr. Clarke from the Commission of the Peace; and, whether the reasons stated in that Resolution for the removal of Dr. Clarke are correct; and, if not, whether he will state the reasons specifically?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The hon. Member sent me a copy of the Resolution to which he refers. That Resolution does not correctly set forth the grounds of Dr. Clarke's supersession. I have already stated the true reasons in reply to the hon. Member's former Question.

Dr. FOX: The right hon. Gentleman gave no specific reason. He merely said that Dr. Clarke had been connected with an illegal act.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Lord Chancellor's grounds for dismissing Dr. Clarke were, as I stated to the House, that he took part in meetings and proceedings inconsistent with respect for the laws and the free exercise of legal rights. [*Cries of* "What proceedings?"]

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Will the right hon. Gentleman lay upon the Table of the House a Return of all the magistrates who have been, or are being, superseded, because——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

INLAND REVENUE — LEGACY DUTY OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE — COMPULSORY RETIREMENT — DIVULGENCE OF OFFICIAL SECRETS.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether the Board of Inland Revenue have submitted to the Treasury a scheme for the revision of the Legacy Duty Office at Somerset House, which will involve the compulsory retirement of a number of clerks who are in the prime of life; and, if so, whether he will undertake to postpone the consideration of any scheme which will further unnecessarily burden the Pension List, until the Royal Commission on the Civil Service shall have had an opportunity of inquiring into and reporting upon the constitution, &c., of the Board of Inland Revenue, and of the Departments under its control; and, whether, in the case of offices where work has fallen off, or where, on other grounds, it may be necessary to reduce numbers, he will consider the advisability of doing this by transferring the supernumerary clerks to other Departments, rather than by adding to the Pension List?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, that by a reprehensible act of disloyalty, such as rarely occurred in that extremely well-managed and satisfactory Department, the Inland Revenue, the existence of a plan for the re-organization of the Legacy Duty Office had been revealed to the hon. Member. The plan was still in an inchoate stage, and was not yet decided upon; and he was surprised to learn that it had been already divulged before any official steps had been taken with regard to it. He was unable to say, from personal knowledge, whether any of the clerks who were to be compulsorily retired were in the prime of life or not; but, with scarcely an exception, they had all seen over 30 years' service. He should at no time consent to any scheme which would unnecessarily burden the Pension List, for he was quite as alive as the hon. Member, or anyone else, to the danger of increasing that list. He could not undertake to defer any reforms in the Civil Service Departments till the Commission had reported, for that Commission had a vast amount of work before it; and if there were any reforms that could be carried out for the benefit of the Public Service before it reported, he could not undertake to delay such reform. As to the last part of the Question, he should always consider whether it would not be better to transfer officers who had still good work in them than to place them on the Pension List.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman would take any steps to ascertain how the secret was divulged?

Mr. GOSCHEN said, he would undertake the painful task of considering whether any steps should be taken in the matter; but he would say, meanwhile, that it would be more satisfactory if hon. Members to whom such revelations were made would themselves point out to the persons making them the injury they inflicted on the Public Service, and the likelihood thereby of defeating the necessary reforms.

Mr. CONYBEARE observed, that he had not the slightest idea that it was an official secret that was divulged, else he should probably not have asked a Question on the subject.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked, whether it was the practice of the Treasury, or whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer could adduce a single instance in which the Treasury had prevented an increase in the Pension List by adopting the principle of interchangeability of clerks?

Mr. GOSCHEN replied that he could not answer the Question off-hand. No doubt it would be a more satisfactory mode of proceeding to give employment to clerks rather than pensions. The hon. Member would be aware that when clerks were pensioned they were not the most efficient in the Service.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION AT KILTIMAGH, CO. MAYO.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked the Postmaster General, If he will consider the claims of Kiltimagh, in County Mayo, to telegraphic accommodation; whether Kiltimagh has a population of 1,300; and, whether many smaller towns in Mayo have not telegraph stations?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that I shall be glad to consider the claims of Kiltimagh to telegraphic accommodation. I have called for the necessary Reports; and as soon as I receive them, I will communicate the result to the hon. Member.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY — A FORCE SENT TO RANDALSTOWN, CO. ANTRIM.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, By whom the Irish Government were induced to send a Divisional Magistrate, a Resident Magistrate, a County Inspector, a number of other Inspectors, and a force of about 100 constables, to Randalstown, County Antrim, on St. Patrick's Day; and, from what fund the cost of the exhibition will be defrayed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The Government received information that a Roman Catholic procession was intended to march into Randalstown through the Protestant quarters, and that an adequate police force would be required. The cost would be defrayed by the Constabulary Vote; but about £19 would eventually fall on the county in respect of such men as were drafted from other counties.

Mr. SEXTON asked, what steps the Government intended to take with regard to the gentlemen who gave them this false and misleading information on the subject?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he had no ground for believing the report was false. On the contrary, he believed the procession actually was intended.

ALLOTMENTS ACT, 1882—HILL'S CHARITY, COLLOMPTON.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, Whether the Charity Commissioners directed the Trustees of Hill's Charity, Collompton, to carry out the provisions of "The Allotments Act, 1882;" whether the Trustees, in disregard of such instructions, and in direct violation of the Act, have let the lands of the Charity on lease, thereby depriving the labourers of their legal right to allotments conferred upon them by the Act; and, whether the Charity Commissioners will take steps to cancel the lease, or, failing their power to do that, will call upon the Trustees to hire other land for the purpose of allotments, in accordance with section 5 of the Act of 1882?

The VICE PRESIDENT (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford): In May, 1884, the Charity Commissioners directed the Trustees of Hill's Charity to carry out the provisions of the Allotments Extension Act, 1882. The Commissioners are informed that the Trustees, in disregard of such instructions, have let the whole of the Charity land on lease for a term of six years from Michaelmas, 1885. Notwithstanding this, the Commissioners are taking, and will continue to take, all steps in their power to compel the Trustees to set apart and to let the Charity land in allotments under the Act.

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS—GENERAL INDEX TO THE REPORTS.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, Whether a "general Index to Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts, together with selections from the Reports," has recently been printed at the expense of the Government; whether the said Index is to be issued as a Parliamentary Paper to Members of this House; and, if not, whether it can be obtained by payment at the Sale Office at this House; and, if not printed for circulation, nor to be had by purchase, will he state to this House why the Index was printed, how many copies have been printed, and the cost, and how those copies have been disposed of; and, whether copies will be placed in the Library for the use of Members of this House?

The SECRETARY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.): The Index referred to was prepared by the Exchequer and Audit Department for the use of that Office, and 100 copies were printed with that object. It was not intended for general circulation; but copies were supplied to the Public Accounts Committee. Copies have now been placed in the Library for the use of Members of this House.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. KELLY, CLERK OF PETTY SESSIONS AT TOOMEBRIDGE, CO. ANTRIM.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL (Fermanagh, S.) (for Mr. Pinkerton) (Galway) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Mr. Kelly, Clerk of Petty Sessions at Toomebridge, County Antrim, when appointed two years ago, gave an undertaking in writing that he would reside in the district before he was elected by the magistrates; whether the said Mr. Kelly has recently been appointed Clerk of Petty Sessions for the district of Mahera and Magherafelt, and whether he will now be able to fulfil his engagement; and, whether he is aware that serious public inconvenience will result from there being only one clerk in these three populous districts, the extremes of which are so far distant from each other, and situated in different counties?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The facts are as stated in the first and second paragraphs. The question as to where Mr. Kelly shall be required to reside is now under consideration, various Memorials having been received on the subject.

NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—PAYMENT OF RESULTS FEES AT ROUNDSTONE.

MR. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the cause of the delay in paying the results fees accruing to the schools of the parish of Roundstone, the examination of these schools having taken place during the first fortnight of February last; and, whether it is customary for all results fees to be paid within the month following the month in which the examination is held?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): This Question is down without Notice. It has been referred to the Commissioners of National Education for inquiry.

LAW AND JUSTICE — SENTENCE ON ANNIE SHIPTON, CONVICTED OF CHILD DESERTION.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Annie Shipton, who, being in great distress, left her child at the house of the child's father, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment; and, whether he is prepared to re-consider the case, with a view to a mitigation of the sentence?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, his attention had been called to this case, and he was now in communication with the magistrate; and as soon as he received his Report he would consider whether the case was not one in which he would advise Her Majesty to interfere.

ADMIRALTY — DISMISSAL OF LIEUTENANT HALL—THE QUEEN'S REGULATIONS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is the fact that Lieutenant Hall has been sentenced to dismissal from the Service in consequence of his misconstruction of a Regulation which Mr. Justice A. L. Smith has declared to be

> "So framed as to leave considerable doubt as to its meaning,"

adding—

> "It seems to us that even a lawyer of some learning and experience might be excused if he failed to interpret it correctly;"

and, whether the Admiralty will undertake to revise the Code of Regulations, so as to make them less open to misconstruction on the part of officers and others interested?

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked, whether the noble Lord would undertake to revise the sentence on this officer, which had really been passed for inability to read an incomprehensible Regulation?

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked, whether, as the case had been undertaken rather with the desire to vindicate the position taken up by the Admiralty than to punish an individual, the noble Lord could, without detriment to the Public Service, remove the stigma of dismissal from Lieutenant Hall?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): Lieutenant Hall has been dismissed from the Service because he was found guilty by a court martial of the grave offence of desertion, having left his ship when employed on foreign service. The plea attempted to be set up in his defence was that he was entitled to act under a certain Regulation of the Service. Such an interpretation would enable every or any commissioned officer to leave the Navy whenever he chose, regardless of the wants and exigencies of the Service, and carries with it its own refutation. I can hold out no hope of remitting or altering the sentence. As the wording of the Regulation in question is not as clear as it should be it will be cancelled.

THE CURRENCY QUESTION—REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If his attention has been called to a paragraph, in the money article of *The Times* of Wednesday, to this effect—

> "The Royal Commission on the Currency Question has adjourned for the Easter Holidays; but we have reason to believe that sufficient evidence has already been taken to enable the members to make up their minds as to the nature of the Report which they will publish, and that the preponderance of opinion is decidedly in favour of maintaining the *status quo*;"

and, whether there is any ground for this assertion?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am unable to answer the Question with regard to the proceedings of the Royal Commission. I have already stated in the House that Royal Commissions act entirely on their own responsibility, and that the Government do not interfere with the discharge of their duties. But the hon. Member will observe that fresh appointments have recently been made to the Commission; and I have no reason to believe myself that the statement made in the newspaper referred to is correct.

INLAND REVENUE—THE PROPERTY AND INCOME TAX—DEFAULT OF COLLECTIONS.

SIR FREDERICK MAPPIN (York, W.R., Hallamshire) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, If a Collector, who is appointed by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to collect the Property and Income Taxes, absconds, leaving a deficit in the amount collected, have the Commissioners power to collect a proportionate rate, to make up the deficiency from those persons who possess receipts, showing they have already paid these taxes; and, whether, if such is the practice, he will give instructions that this injustice be discontinued in the future?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): No parish is answerable for the acts, or offences, or defaults of collectors appointed by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. If a parish is responsible, it will be for the defaults of those who are appointed by local Commissioners.

THE IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he is aware that the supply of copies of the Irish Land Law Bill is utterly insufficient for the demands of hon. Members? As I have been informed, a supply of only 400 copies was sent into the Vote Office, which were almost immediately exhausted; and hon. Members were besieged by applications from their constituents for copies of this Bill, which they were unable to meet.

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster), in reply, said, he was not aware of that fact; but he would immediately communicate with the officers of the other House, with a view to obtain a supply of copies of the Bill which would be adequate to meet the requirements of hon. Members.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—THE RIOTS AT BELFAST—THE COMMISSION.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland a Question of which I have given him private Notice. It is in reference to the recent engagement which the right hon. Gentleman gave that the Government intended to accept in principle the recommendations of the four Commissioners who inquired into the Belfast riots, and who reported in January last. The Report of Mr. Wallace M'Hardy, the other Commissioner, has not yet been circulated amongst Members, but it has appeared in the Press. I find from it that he is directly at issue with the representatives of the authorities in Belfast and the four Commissioners upon very important points in reference to special constables, the formation of a Committee to regulate a Committee of Local Justices for control of the police, and the adjudication upon the Bench by Local Justices. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether he adheres to his engagement that the Government will accept on principle the recommendations of Mr. Justice Day, Major General Bulwer, Mr. Le Poer Trench, and Mr. Richard Adams; and, whether they will pay any attention to the individual recommendations of Mr. Wallace M'Hardy?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): The hon. Gentleman sent me Notice that he intended to ask this Question, though I did not exactly understand the terms in which it is put. I hope he will understand from me that the Government have arrived at no final decision with regard to the details of their arrangements with regard to Belfast. I have not had an opportunity of studying the details of Mr. M'Hardy's Report; but no decision will be taken by the Government within the course of the next few days, and I will be glad to communicate any decision immediately it is made to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. SEXTON: Do I understand, in the meantime, that the Government maintain their former pledge—that they will generally adhere to the recommendation of the four Commissioners?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, Sir, I shall certainly withdraw from no pledge given by the Government. I will be very happy if the hon. Gentleman will communicate with me on the subject.

MOTION.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE EASTER RECESS.

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I have received a communication from the other side of the House, to the effect that it would be agreeable to hon. Members that I should now move that the House, at its rising, adjourn till Tuesday next, and if that is the desire of hon. Gentlemen on both sides I will conclude with that Motion. The Bill for the amendment of the Criminal Law in Ireland stands on the Paper for to-day; and under these circumstances, if this Motion is accepted, the Bill will not be proceeded with to-day, but will be taken again on Tuesday next. I think it is right that hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House should know that that is the arrangement. I understand the Motion will be accepted, so as not to involve delay and debate. That, I believe, is the wish of both sides of the House, in order to enable Gentlemen to get away by the afternoon train. In making this Motion I am carrying out the engagement I made to the House a few days ago—that if it was the desire of the House generally that this step should be taken I would do everything in my power to meet that wish; and it is in accordance with that wish that I now make the Motion that the House, at its rising, do adjourn till Tuesday next.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will, at the rising of the House this day, adjourn till Tuesday next."—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) presumed that there would be no attempt to make progress with any of the Government Orders of the Day at that Sitting.

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir; nothing.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said that, though he would not oppose the Motion which the right hon. Gentleman had made, he and those who sat near him did not approve of the holiday being so short.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) asked, when it was proposed to take the second reading of the Coal Mines, &c., Regulation Bill, as he understood the Representatives of mining constituencies were anxious to have some discussion on the subject?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.), in reply, said, that if hon. Members wished to have a discussion on the second reading of this Bill, he must fix a day on which discussion could be taken; but he had been under the impression that a second reading discussion would not be necessary, as all the points that arose on the Bill were really points for Committee.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, that he had gathered from consultation with hon. Members specially interested in the measure that it was desirable to have it discussed on the second reading.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) also urged that the Representatives of the miners wished to have the Bill discussed on the second reading at an hour when the debate on it could be duly reported.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston) speaking for colliery proprietors, said, that they would be quite content that the Bill should be taken without a discussion on the second reading. It was one in which the safety of miners was deeply concerned; but he understood that the Bill was not to be discussed in a hostile spirit, and there would be an opportunity afforded to those who desired to argue questions of principle on the Motion for going into Committee. He would suggest that that would be the proper stage at which to take any discussion.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart-Wortley) (Sheffield, Hallam) said, he had full reason to believe that not only the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), but also the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division of Northumberland (Mr. Fenwick), and the hon. Member for Mid Durham (Mr. W. Crawford)—all Representatives of the miners—had been fully prepared and willing that the Bill should be read a second time without discussion to-day.

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR said, that some of the hon. Members whom the hon. Gentleman had just mentioned were the very Members whom he had consulted on that subject.

Motion *agreed to.*

House adjourned at Three o'clock p.m. till Tuesday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 12*th April*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [217] [*Third Night*], *debate further adjourned;* Glebe Lands Occupation (England)* [162]; Christchurch (Southampton) Charter (Correction of Error) * [209].

Committee—Report—Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) (*re-comm.*) * [213].

MR. SPEAKER'S INDISPOSITION.

Mr. SPEAKER addressed the House as followeth:—

"I beg respectfully to make my acknowledgments to the House for the kind indulgence shown to me during my indisposition last week, and I also wish to express my thanks to the Chairman of Ways and Means for discharging the duties of this Chair during my absence."

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

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NORFOLK COUNTY (NORTH WESTERN DIVISION).

Mr. SPEAKER acquainted the House that he had received from the Honourable Sir Charles Edward Pollock, knight, and the Honourable Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, K.C.S.I., Justices of the High Court of Justice, and two of the Judges for the time being for the Trial of Election Petitions in England, a Certificate and Report relating to the Election for Norfolk County (North Western Division):—

The Corrupt Practices Prevention Acts, 1854 to 1883.

To the Right Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons.

We, the Honourable Sir Charles Edward Pollock, Knight, Baron of the Exchequer, and the Honourable Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, Knight Commander of the Star of India, Justices of the High Court of Justice, and two of the Judges for the time being for the trial of Election Petitions in England, do hereby, in pursuance of the said Acts, certify that, upon the 5th day of April, 1887, we duly held a Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London, for the trial of, and did try, the Parliamentary Election Petition for the North Western Division of the County of Norfolk, which was presented on the 17th day of February, 1887, wherein Joseph Arch, a Candidate at such Election, was the Petitioner, and Henry Cavendish Bentinck (commonly called Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck), also a Candidate at such Election, was the Respondent; which Petition alleged that such Election was held on the 9th day of July, 1886, and that the said Henry Cavendish Bentinck was returned as being duly elected, and that, on or about the 19th day of January, 1887, the said Henry Cavendish Bentinck was guilty of the illegal practice of illegal payment in reference to the said Election, in respect of expenses on account of or in respect of the conduct or management of the said Election, which payment was made contrary to the provisions of "The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883," and prayed that it might be determined that the said Henry Cavendish Bentinck was disqualified to sit as a Member for the said Division, and that his election and seat might be declared void.

We report that, at the conclusion of the said trial, we determined that the said Henry Cavendish Bentinck is not disqualified to sit as a Member for the said Division, and we do hereby certify in writing such our determination to you.

Dated this 5th day of April, 1887.

C. E. Pollock.
J. F. Stephen.

And the said Certificate and Report were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

QUESTIONS.

INLAND FISHERIES — THE LOWER TRENT DISTRICT—EEL NETTINGS.

Colonel EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether, in view of the great destruction of scale or coarse fish, caused by eel and other netting in the Lower Trent district, the Board of Trade would cause inquiry to be made as to the best method to be adopted to prevent this destruction, and thus preserve the sport of angling, now threatened with extinction, to the inhabitants of that district?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Board of Trade have already directed the Inspector of Fisheries to inquire into the matter referred to by the hon. and gallant Gentleman.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY — ALLEGED ARREST OF ——— M'NULTY, CO. ROSCOMMON.

Mr. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true that the house of a man named M'Nulty, of French Park, County Roscommon, was broken into by Police Sergeant Watson and policemen acting under him; whether M'Nulty's pockets were emptied by the police sergeant, and he himself assaulted, arrested, and imprisoned; whether Police Sergeant Watson had any legal warrant for these acts, or whether he was acting under the verbal directions of the honourable Mr. French, J.P., brother to Lord de Freyne; whether M'Nulty was prosecuted by the Crown for alleged participation in the Plan of Campaign on the estate of Lord de Freyne, and returned for trial by two stipendiary magistrates; whether, when the case was brought under the attention of Her Majesty's Attorney General before the Assizes, he directed the prosecution to be abandoned; whether civil proceedings have since been issued against the honourable Mr. French and Police Sergeant Watson by M'Nulty, and notice served on them both; whether Police Sergeant Watson has been removed to another station; and, whether he has any objection to state where Police Sergeant Watson is now stationed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): These questions have already been answered by the Attorney General for Ireland, and I have nothing to add to what my right hon. and learned Friend has said. I am not aware whether any civil proceedings have been instituted against Mr. French. But if that is the fact it will afford good reason for declining to make any further communication on the subject. Sergeant Watson has returned to his station at Athlone, from which he has lately been temporarily absent on duty.

THE EXCISE DEPARTMENT — PROSECUTIONS—"COMPROMISE FINES."

Mr. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, What is the practice of the Excise authorities with respect to prosecutions by that Department of persons selling exciseable liquors on other than licensed premises, and the acceptance of what are called "compromise fines" for such offences; whether, in the month of February last, several licensed grocers in Dundee and Broughty Ferry became liable to prosecution for such offences, and were compromised with privately, without being prosecuted, while another grocer who committed a similar offence was prosecuted; whether he is prepared to give the names of the parties compromised with, to state the several amounts of their "compromise fines," and explain at whose instance the Excise authorities were induced to forego these prosecutions, and give any further particulars relating to these cases; and, whether the practice of settling these offences secretly, by the acceptance of so-called "compromise fines," is to be continued?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The Board of Inland Revenue are empowered by law to accept a "compromise fine" where they think proper, in mitigation of any penalty incurred by the sale of exciseable liquors on other than licensed premises, or by any other offence against the Excise Laws. Four retailers of spirits (grocers) in Dundee and Broughty Ferry were reported, in the beginning of the year, for the offence of selling exciseable liquors on unlicensed premises. In three cases compromise fines were accepted, and the fourth was referred to the magistrates for their decision. It is not desirable that the names of the parties compromised with, and the amount of their compromise fines, should be given. In the opinion of the Inland Revenue, the circumstances of each of the above cases warranted them in accepting compromise fines, and they were guided in their decisions solely by the merits of each case. Applications were received from each of the offenders in question, asking that compromise fines might be accepted. No such application was received in the fourth case. It is not desirable to withdraw from the Board of Inland Revenue the power granted to them by statute of accepting compromise fines in certain cases.

NORTH SEA FISHERIES—DAMAGES TO THE DRIFT NET FISHERIES.

SIR SAVILE CROSSLEY (Suffolk, Lowestoft) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether he will state what steps Her Majesty's Government propose taking, in order to carry out the recommendations of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to inquire into the complaints of damage alleged to have been inflicted on the British Drift Net Fisheries in the North Sea?

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Perhaps the hon. Baronet will allow me to answer the Question. I have to say that the Board of Trade will communicate with the Foreign Office with the view of their transmitting officially to the Belgian Government a copy of the Report. The Board of Trade hope that the Belgian Government may see fit to co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in order to give effect to the suggestions contained in it.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.), having pointed out the importance of this matter being urged on as quickly as possible, inasmuch as, he said, these unfortunate outrages would recommence in about four months' time, asked, in the interests of the fishing industry, whether the hon. Gentleman understood that this was an affair of urgency?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: I hope the outrages will not be recommenced at the time my hon. Friend specifies; but I can assure him that the Board of Trade are so fully alive to the importance of the subject that, in fact, they are already in communication with the Foreign Office with reference to it.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — RETURN OF NAMES, DATE OF APPOINTMENT, AND PREVIOUS OCCUPATIONS OF RESIDENT MAGISTRATES.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which he had given him private Notice—namely, Whether, before the Second Reading of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill, he would lay upon the Table a Return showing the name of each Resident Magistrate in Ireland, the date of his appointment, and his previous occupation, if any?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): A Return giving these and other details is in course of preparation, and as soon as it can be got ready, will be laid on the Table of the House.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—SUMMONSES TO THE KILRUSH PETTY SESSIONS—CONSTABLE HOLMES.

MR. JORDAN (Clare, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been directed to a report in *The Kilrush Herald*, County Clare, of 2nd April, of a case in which a Constable Holmes summoned Mr. Andrew Bourke, because his hound barked at the dog of Captain Welch, the Resident Magistrate; whether Holmes so swore in Court; whether Holmes, in conjunction with Head Constable Kennedy, summoned several other inhabitants of Kilrush on the same day; whether the cases were dismissed by the other four magistrates, the Chairman (Captain Welch) alone dissenting; whether Holmes is a police recruit and Kennedy was only recently appointed to that station; whether he is aware that these summonses have caused considerable irritation in the district; and, whether he will cause an inquiry into the circumstances of the case?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that Mr. Bourke was not summoned for the reason alleged in the Question. He was summoned in common with other persons who were charged with allowing dogs to be at large in Kilrush. The cases were dismissed by four magistrates, who were not satisfied that the offence was proved, the Resident Magistrate dissenting from that opinion. Holmes has been a year and a-half in the service. Kennedy, the head constable, was only recently appointed to Kilrush, and these officers appear to have acted in the discharge of their duty. The summonses have not been the cause of irritation in the district, as the people were glad to have dangerous dogs kept off the streets.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—SENTENCE FOR SUCCESSIVE ASSAULTS—CASE OF ROBERT COMERFORD, OF BELFAST.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, seeing that sentence of six months' imprisonment was the extreme punishment in England for several assaults committed on the same occasion, and that Robert Comerford, of Belfast, had now been imprisoned for three months over that period, he would ask the Lord Lieutenant to exercise his prerogative and liberate the man?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): As the hon. Member is probably aware, it is not my function to advise the Lord Lieutenant as to his use of the prerogative of mercy; but if either the prisoner or his friends present a Memorial to His Excellency I have no doubt it will be considered.

Mr. M'CARTAN asked, whether the state of the law was such that for a crime committed in Ireland 29 months' imprisonment would be given; whereas in England, for the same crime, only six months' imprisonment could be given?

[No reply.]

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—REFLECTIONS ON THE SPEAKER OF THIS HOUSE.—PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I desire, Sir, with the leave of the House, to make a personal explanation with reference to a question which was raised on Monday week, when certain expressions of mine were brought under your notice. It will be in the recollection of the House that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) on that occasion called attention to a speech which I was reported to have delivered out-of-doors, and, in the course of introducing the matter, the right hon. Gentleman used this expression—

> "I have informed the hon. Member of my intention of putting this Question to you, and I do not understand that the hon. Member repudiates the substantial accuracy of that speech."

Now, Sir, in the first place, I wish to say that the right hon. Gentleman was not at all justified in making use of that expression. He simply gave me formal Notice, a few minutes before he introduced the matter, that he was going to bring it on. He showed me no report; he referred to no report; he did not ask me whether I admitted the accuracy of the report, or of any report; and when he introduced the subject to the House he did not quote from any report, so as to give me any idea of what the words he referred to were. Therefore, as the individual whose conduct was called in question, I took the only course open to me. I had no time to examine any report, nor had I seen a single report of my speech in any newspaper. I had no intention, and I think no one would suggest that I was required, to express regret, or to make an apology, for words which I had never spoken, and which I never intended to speak. Therefore, under the circumstances, I used this form of expression, which will be in the recollection of the House—

> "Following upon that, I desire to say that if what I am reported in *The Times* and other newspapers to have said should, on examination, be found accurately to represent what I did say, and if it does appear that I in any way expressed myself in a manner calculated to reflect upon you, Sir, as the occupant of the Chair, I should at once most humbly and most fully express my regret."

Now, Sir, I have since examined two reports, one in *The Times* and the other in *The Daily News*, and what do I find? I find that neither of these reports professes to be a verbatim report; neither is a full report, and neither is an accurate report; and I must say that it speaks volumes for the discrimination and fairness of both those papers that the very sentence of my speech which would have protected me from the imputations and censures which have been heaped upon me is diligently omitted from both reports. That sentence was at the very commencement of the remarks I made at the Westminster Palace Hotel, and was in the following terms :—

> "I hope that no word will escape me that can be possibly construed as unworthily reflecting upon the Speaker, or as being unbecoming in me as a Member of Parliament."

I have asked several hon. Members who were present if they remember my having made use of the sentence, and they say that they do. This statement proves what I said last week, that I did not intend to make any personal attack on you, Sir; and I maintain that, as a matter of fact, I did not make one remark on your conduct for which I am liable to be called to account by this House. Although I should be very sorry to assume anything as to the somewhat erratic genius of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire, if he is the fair-minded gentleman I believe him to be, and have always supposed him to be, I think he will himself admit that had that particular and material sentence in my speech been reported, he would not have considered it necessary to call your attention, Sir, to what I said out-of-doors on the occasion in question. I rejoice, Sir, as every other hon. Member rejoices, to see you back in your place once more.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [THIRD NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University) said, that, in the course of the debate, they had heard statements as to the history of Ireland, past and present, about Home Rule, about the Irish Land Question, and the relations between Irish landlords and tenants; about the 85 Coercion Bills said to have been passed, and about the events of the years 1882 and 1869, and 1846 and 1833; in fact, it would be impossible to imagine almost any subject connected with Ireland that had not been brought forward in some shape or form in the present debate, and yet it must strike anyone that there had been one remarkable omission from the topics treated of by hon. Members in the discussion of the Bill, and that was any distinct reference to the provisions of the Bill itself, or the character of the proposals which the Government had submitted to the House. No doubt, there had been, in the course of the discussion, a great many adjectives and epithets applied to the Bill. They had heard it called hateful, infamous, and tyrannical; that it would crush out in Ireland everything like Constitutional liberty; and that, if it were passed, the people would suffer greater despotism than the despotism of Warsaw. Those adjectives and epithets were, no doubt, very strong; but if they excepted two speeches at the very outside made in the course of the debate, he could not find in the observations made by hon. Members opposite any evidence that they had read, much less carefully considered, the provisions of the Bill. It seemed to him that when the House was asked to affirm an Amendment of this character, nothing would be more relevant, nothing would be more important, than to look carefully at the provisions of the measure against which it was directed, in order to see whether these provisions were of that terrible and un-Constitutional character which had been described by successive speakers. It was probably some such idea as this which was in the mind of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) when he addressed the House. He told the House, in the course of his very able speech, that he had refrained from taking part in the debate until he had had an opportunity of looking at what he called the textual provisions of the Bill. Having studied the Bill, his hon. and learned Friend had come to the conclusion that it exceeded in stringency all former Coercion Bills submitted to the House, and he based his opposition to the Bill, to a great extent, upon the character which he gave it. In the few observations which he intended to make, he thought he would be contributing in the best way he could to the debate by taking into consideration the actual proposals the Government were making to the House, and to see how far those proposals justified the general language which had been applied to it by some hon. Gentlemen opposite, and the specific language which had been applied to it by his hon. and learned Friend. So far from accepting that description, he thought he would be able to satisfy the House that the provisions which they asked Parliament to make law were in themselves equitable and just; that the Amendments sought to be made in the Criminal Law in Ireland were fair and reasonable; that the Government had introduced ample safeguards to protect any person from injustice and oppression; and that there was no reason why the Bill might not be extended or made law in any portion of Her Majesty's Dominions, without interfering in the slightest degree with Constitutional rights, or without infringing in any way public liberty. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), in introducing the Bill, explained that the Government considered that the Criminal Law in Ireland required to be amended in three directions and for three purposes. Her Majesty's Government thought, in the first place, that it was necessary to make better provision for the detection of crime; secondly, for the punishment of crime when detected; and, thirdly, to so amend the Criminal Law as to check, and, if possible, put an end altogether to that system of intimidation which admittedly existed in many parts of Ireland at the present time. Before referring to these three separate classes of amendments of the Criminal Law he would ask the attention of the House to some observations of his right hon. Friend which seemed to him to be very much overlooked by hon. Members who had criticized the Bill. At the opening of his speech the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary announced that it was not the view of the Government that these Amendments were required for the purpose of maintaining law and order in all Ireland. The Government pointed out that the state of Ireland in many parts was fairly satisfactory, but they called attention at the same time to the fact that a part of the country was very far from satisfactory, and that this was the reason why they introduced the Bill. He specified particular counties in Ireland—Galway, Mayo, Limerick, Clare, Kerry, and Cork; and his right hon. Friend said that as far as those counties were concerned they would be able to demonstrate to the House that there was such a disorganization of society, that law and order was so entirely set aside, that it was absolutely necessary, if the Government were to perform its first duty, to introduce some amendment in the existing law to remedy that state of affairs. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary relied, and the Government relied, most strongly upon the expressions of opinion by Her Majesty's Judges delivered by them in those counties he had specified during the last Spring Circuit. Hon. Gentlemen opposite said the Government took the charges of four Judges in those particular counties, but that they had entirely omitted the charges delivered by other Judges in other counties. The answer of the Government to that argument was that it was perfectly useless to refer to the charges of Judges delivered in other counties, of the state of crime or disorder in which they did not complain; but when the Government pointed to the particular portions of Ireland which were disturbed, and when they called attention to the statements of all the Judges who had visited those portions of the country, it seemed to him that the case was an immensely strong one, and he had not heard an answer made to it. He did not mean to say that he had not heard an answer attempted. Hon. Members from Ireland had dealt with this matter in a characteristic fashion. When testimony was brought forward in connection with Ireland, hon. Gentlemen opposite had a simple way of dealing with it. They divided such testimony into two classes. One class was the testimony which in any way supported or tended in favour of the National League, its action, or its objects; and the person who bore that testimony was to receive the highest character. The other class of testimony was that which reflected on the National League and its objects. But this testimony was to be dealt with in another way; it was to be rejected, and the House was told that the witness was unworthy of belief in any circumstances. That was a very easy method to adopt in a matter of this kind. But it sometimes led to contradictory and unsatisfactory results; for it sometimes happened that the same witness would on different or even on the same occasion make statements, some of which would rather favour the views of the National League, and others which would be antagonistic to them. In the course of the debate the House had had an instance of this. One of the most important witnesses examined before the Cowper Commission was Sir Redvers Buller. That officer gave some evidence with regard to the relations of landlord and tenant, and his view of those relations had been seized upon by hon. Members opposite; but, at the same time, they found answers given by the same witness, in which he spoke in the strongest way regarding the intimidation exercised by the National League and the illegitimate character of that intimidation. In the one case the statements of this witness were received by hon. Gentlemen opposite with perfect reliance, while in the other they declared that the evidence was to be rejected entirely, or only the smallest attention was to be paid to it. He suggested, on the other hand, that in dealing with the evidence of the same witness they ought to consider that it was equally worthy of credit when it pointed in one direction or in the other. Then with regard to the action of the Irish Judges. The Irish Judges were placed in rather a peculiar position, for there was hardly one of them who had not been praised in one way or another by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and not one of them who had not been blamed. When Lord Chief Baron Palles went down to Sligo and held Assizes there, he found some irregularities in the constitution of the jury panel, and declined to proceed with the trial of the prisoners with the panel so constituted. The Nationalist Press were loud in their praise of the Judge's action, and declared that he was the one just Judge in Ireland. When, however, he directed a new panel to be struck, and when it was found that the prisoners who were tried before jurors taken from that panel were convicted, what was the result? The Nationalist Press turned round and attacked the Judge as severely as any Judge in Ireland had ever been attacked. He (Mr. Holmes) was, therefore, not at all surprised to hear Justices Johnson, O'Brien, Murphy, and Lawson attacked by hon. Members as persons whose statements on this subject could not be received. Because these matters have been reiterated again and again in that House there was some danger that it might be supposed by some persons not acquainted with Irish affairs that Irish Judges differ in some extraordinary way from English Judges —that they were political Judges or political partizans. Now, he had had the opportunity of hearing and seeing the Irish Judges for the last 20 or 25 years while engaged in the performance of their duty as administrators of the law, and he challenged any hon. Member, not by making a general allegation, but by adducing specific facts, to show that any particular Irish Judge had indulged in a political or partizan harangue from the Bench. He asked any hon. Member to call attention to any particular passages in support of any imputation.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): The Rules of the House do not permit it.

Mr. HOLMES: The Irish Judges performed their duty as honourably, as honestly, and as fairly as the Judges of this country. Five of them who had been mentioned were promoted by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). He had no doubt that in selecting those Judges the right hon. Gentleman took care to select men of honour, of integrity, and of learning; and having himself had the honour of practising before them, he could say that each of them answered to that description. Each of those Judges had been chosen by the right hon. Gentleman opposite from his own political followers. He was not blaming the right hon. Gentleman for that; but each of those Judges, as far as they were politicians, had been supporters of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and there was no reason to suppose that they had changed their opinions. But what object could men —placed in the position which those Judges occupied—have in misrepresenting the facts, or giving a false colour to the matters which came before them? They were men placed beyond fear. They held their offices by the same tenure as the Judges in England, and they had the same freedom from all inducement to mis-state facts. As far as hon. and right hon. Members opposite were concerned, they had not made any charge of that character against the Irish Judges. He did not expect them to do so. The hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce), indeed, said that the charges delivered by those Judges were not judicial utterances, but rhetorical or oratorical utterances. Well, what were the circumstances under which they were delivered? The Judges had, under Her Majesty's Commission, to go to the various counties of Ireland to deliver the gaols, and to inquire into the peace and order of those counties; for it was well known that the Commission under which they acted was wide in its terms. The Judges had the opportunity of hearing from every official of the county, who was bound to attend them, full information connected with the peace and order of that county. Not merely the Government officials, but the local officials attended the Courts, and supplied the Judges with such statistics as they required; and if any persons had an opportunity of judging fully, fairly, and impartially as to the state of the county in regard to law and order, the Judges who went on their Circuits had that opportunity. They addressed there the Grand Inquest of the county, who might not only find a bill of indictment against a particular criminal; but by ancient usage make a presentment in reference to any matter that affected the peace and order of the county; and, therefore, there was nothing more legitimate than for the Judge in his charge to refer not only to the calendar before him, but to the peace and order of the county. Accordingly they always found that in that House those utterances of the Judges were received with the most perfect confidence by any Government. and were relied upon by them in arriving at their conclusions. It had been pointed out that in 1881 the right hon. Gentleman opposite had referred to similar statements made by the Irish Judges, and especially by Lord Fitzgerald, in regard to the peace of parts of the South of Ireland, and had relied on them as grounds upon which to base the demand for legislation. The Judges had a large amount of information placed before them, and also an opportunity of carefully considering it before their charges were delivered. When Mr. Justice O'Brien delivered his charge to the Grand Jury at the last Kerry Grand Assizes he had a document before him which was not prepared by an official of the Crown; but it was a most important document, prepared by one of the officials of the county—the secretary of the Grand Jury—and it embodied a plain statement of facts of a very startling and serious character. It purported to contain the list of applications for compensation for malicious injuries which were to be brought before the Kerry Grand Jury at the Spring Assizes of 1887. Those applications for compensation for malicious injuries were matters which received very careful consideration. They were considered at Presentment Sessions and also by the Grand Jury, and any ratepayer who complained could bring his complaint by way of appeal before the Judge himself, who heard it either with or without the assistance of a jury. Well, in the County of Kerry there were those applications for compensation for malicious injuries to the number of 86, and although they all knew that Ireland had been in a bad state in times past, and that Kerry had not been free from crime, he was informed that in the memory of the oldest inhabitants of County Kerry no such list of applications for compensation for malicious injuries had ever been presented to the Grand Jury, or come before the Presentment Sessions, as that to which he was now referring. Most of those applications passed through the three ordeals which he had mentioned. If that entire document were published it would be seen that there was hardly any form of malicious injury for which compensation could be claimed under Act of Parliament which was not to be found in that list. But he did not intend to go through it fully. He found, for instance, that there were cases of a kind of crime which he supposed everyone would consider as about as foul a crime as could be committed—he meant the slaughter and mutilation of animals. He found in one township—Kilshenane—that Michael Ryan, on behalf of the Land Corporation of Ireland, claimed compensation by reason of a bullock, the property of that Corporation, having been maliciously driven off the lands of Cloughboola, and killed or otherwise destroyed, some time between the hours of half-past 6 on the evening of Sunday, the 22nd, and 5 o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 23rd of August, 1886. The same man had a bullock and a cow, the property of the same Corporation, maliciously killed, injured, or otherwise made away with or disposed of at the same place on the morning of Sunday, July 11th, 1886. Again, the same man had another bullock maliciously or wantonly driven off the lands of Cloughboola, and killed or otherwise destroyed, between 7 o'clock on Saturday evening and 5 in the morning of Sunday, September 18th and 19th, 1886. Again, Thomas Hurley claimed compensation, on behalf of the Land Corporation of Ireland, for two black bullocks, maliciously killed, destroyed, or otherwise made away with at Dromadabeg, some time between 6 o'clock in the evening of Saturday, the 9th, and about 8 o'clock on the morning of Sunday, October 10th, 1886. In another case about 400 acres of game cover were maliciously or wantonly set fire to, burnt, and wholly destroyed at Glashnacree and Knockalough between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, May 5, 1886. On looking through the list he found that some men, whom he should judge to be very poor men and in a humble position—had had their property injured in much the same way. John Keane had one ass, his property, maliciously stabbed and wholly destroyed at Ballinglanna on the night of Tuesday, October 12, 1886. James Keane had one cow (in calf) maliciously wounded and houghed at Aughacasla on the night of Saturday, the 22nd of May, 1886.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): May last?

Mr. HOLMES: Yes.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Then, how is it that a case occurring in May last came to be dealt with at the recent Spring Assizes?

Mr. HOLMES: In these cases, it is necessary to take some preliminary proceedings. That list did not run down to the commencement of the March Assizes. There must be a preliminary application, and the period necessary for that inquiry covered, roughly speaking, about six weeks or two months.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Are these applications included in the Returns of offences?

Mr. HOLMES: Some were included, but others—such as the burning of furze—were not. The houghing of cattle would be reported. Robert Knightley had a milch cow maliciously injured by having her foreleg broken at Killelton between 10 o'clock on Tuesday night, the 20th, and 8 in the morning of Wednesday, July 21, 1886. The same man had a sow pig maliciously injured by having her thigh broken between 9 and 10 o'clock on the night of May 19 last. James Leary had a bull maliciously killed by being beaten over the heart with some blunt instrument at Meelick on Thursday, July 8, 1886. He submitted that it was perfectly impossible to conceive stronger evidence in support of any Bill than that on which the Government based this measure. What could be stronger than the charges delivered by the Judges to the Grand Juries? So far as he could find, no attempt had been made seriously to meet that argument. He (Mr. Holmes) now came to the only part of the case on the other side which he really desired to deal with. He referred to the comments which had been made as to the remedy which the Government proposed for the evils which confronted them, and he intended to show that all the propositions which were embodied in their Bill were fair, reasonable, and moderate, and could not in the slightest degree interfere with Constitutional rights, or infringe public or individual liberty. The first matter was the necessity for the better provision for the detection of crime. Would any hon. Member say that there was not some necessity to amend the law in that respect? Certainly, if any hon. Member entertained that view, he had not yet heard it expressed. The hon. and learned Member for South Hackney admitted the necessity. He referred to the six counties which were mentioned as specially disturbed, and in which, in 536 cases out of 765 outrages reported, no persons were made amenable. The hon. and learned Member for South Hackney stated that no doubt this did seem to show that some provision for the better detection of crime was desirable, but that it was impossible to judge unless they knew the circumstances of the cases in which the persons were not made amenable. Well, he would add another figure. Of the cases not made amenable, in 422 instances the persons who were injured positively declined to make any information on oath or give any information whatever to enable the police to detect the guilty parties. His right hon. Friend called attention to that, and he referred to it now to impress on the House the startling fact that in the majority of the outrages the persons injured would not take the initial steps to bring the guilty persons to justice. When such a state of things existed, he held that it was absolutely necessary that some change must be made in the law for the purpose of obliging these persons to give the information which was required for the purpose of punishing crime. There could not be any fairer provision than that which they had inserted in the Bill for the purpose of enabling an inquiry to be held where a crime was committed, but where no specific individual was charged with the crime. They had not heard from the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney any objection to that. The only objection he had heard to this provision was that taken by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), who said that a provision of this kind might be valuable when the state of the country was normal; but that in the present condition of Ireland it would cause all kinds of dissatisfaction and repugnance among the people, and would bring no benefit along with it. He stated that the detection of the Phœnix Park murderers was not due to this provision, but to the Manifesto denouncing it issued by himself and his friends. The Phœnix Park murder was committed early in May by the Invincibles, but the murderers did not leave Dublin. The hon. Member for Cork referred to the Manifesto which he issued; but, while acquitting him of any desire to mislead the House, they knew very well that crime went on after it, and that fresh crimes were plotted and executed. The conspirators went about as usual after the Manifesto, and they acted as openly as before, and it was not until the Crimes Act was put in force and evidence was taken in private that the criminals were brought to justice; and if that Act of 1882 did nothing more than that—if it contained only the clause which enabled the evidence to be taken which brought the criminals to justice—then he said it rendered invaluable service, as everyone in that House would admit. Having found in Ireland that crime was not detected, and that evidence was not given by those who could give evidence, he thought nothing could be more reasonable than for the Government to ask the House to enact provisions of this kind; and to say that such provisions would interfere with liberty and Constitutional rights was utterly and perfectly absurd. The first time he heard the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in that House was in July, 1885, when he recommended a provision of this kind. But the clause in this Bill contained precautions which were not in the Crimes Act. In regard to the provision for prior investigation, the Government were introducing greater safeguards than were introduced into former Bills. This provision could not be put in force except in the districts that would be proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant, acting on the advice of his Chief Secretary. The evidence taken would be reduced to writing; a public record would be kept, and as for any improper questions which were put, the persons putting them would be held responsible. No person giving evidence would have that evidence brought up against them, and for everything that was done the Attorney General would be directly responsible to that House. That was the first provision. He came next to the provision for the change of venue. The Government said that in certain parts of Ireland society was so disorganized that trial by jury had practically broken down. Was this denied? [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] He did not understand that it was denied by any hon. Member of that House. [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] It certainly was not denied by the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney, who criticized it, but did not dispute it. It had been said that cases had been quoted from counties which were not disturbed—that the difficulties arose in districts which were not in an unsatisfactory state. Had the House forgotten this pregnant fact, that at the Spring Assizes in three counties—Clare, Limerick, and Kerry—after several cases had been tried or attempted to be tried, application was made to the Judges to postpone the remaining trials on the ground that the juries would not convict, and the Judges postponed the trials upon the ground that sufficient proof was forthcoming that it was impossible to obtain just verdicts from the jury? It was said that when the business at the Assizes for one county had been too great to be disposed of in the time allowed for those Assizes, the Judge had been so anxious to get to the adjoining county at the appointed time that in defiance of law and justice he had adjourned the cases. But this statement of the case was really too much for anyone to accept; for if the ordinary period of the Assizes were not sufficient for the business, it was the duty of the Judge to adjourn the Assizes, so as to dispose of the remaining undisposed cases. The real grounds for the adjournment were stated in open Court, and it would be impossible to lay a stronger foundation for the proceeding. He admitted that there were many juries who were not in sympathy with law, but were in sympathy with criminals, and who would prefer that they should escape apart from any difficulty in the law. But what law was it that these juries were not in sympathy with? This Bill did not deal with the law of landlord and tenant, with the law of contracts or of civil rights, but it dealt with the Criminal Law, which was identical in every particular with the Criminal Law of Great Britain—and, indeed, of every civilized country. What an absurdity it was to say that crime had not been punished because men were not in sympathy with the Criminal Law, when that law was such as was found to be suitable to the condition of every civilized country. If there was this want of sympathy on the part of jurors with the ordinary Criminal Law, then an effort must be made, if trial by jury was to be continued, to get juries who were in sympathy with the law. While admitting that a great number of jurors were not in sympathy with the law, and even that some were in sympathy with crime, he must affirm that many were actuated not so much by sympathy as by fear of consequences. If you found that in parts of Ireland juries would not do their duty, whether it was from sympathy or from fear, was it not better to make provision for trying cases where juries would be free from sympathy with the accused or the fear of consequences? The hon. and learned Member for Hackney said that it might be necessary to change the venue, and that that could be done now. But if the ordinary law were sufficient for the purpose why did not the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) in 1882 have recourse to it, instead of introducing special provisions for the change of venue? The answer was that the ordinary provisions by which the venue could be changed were so cumbersome and so intricate as to be practically useless. The laws of England and of Ireland were the same in this respect, except that in Ireland there was no law corresponding to Palmer's Act in England, and change of venue under the ordinary existing provisions was out of the question. Therefore the right hon. Member for Derby found in 1882, as the present Government found now, that the law must be amended in some particulars. Scotland would always bear comparison as regarded the lawfulness and the well-ordered and law-abiding conduct of its inhabitants with the rest of the United Kingdom, and from time immemorial the Lord Advocate had had power to order that criminal cases arising in any part of Scotland should be tried in Edinburgh by an Edinburgh jury. Then in civil actions in this country, while it had been held from early times that it was necessary that they should be tried where the cause of action arose, when that requirement was not convenient it had been got rid of and a plaintiff had been allowed to lay the venue where he liked, and a defendant to change it if he desired to do so and could show any reasonable grounds for suggesting that the action would not be fairly and properly tried at the place chosen by the plaintiff. Recognizing the fairness of these analogies, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby suggested that the changes he made in 1882 would be valuable as permanent provisions for Ireland. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney did not challenge in any way the provision of the Bill that, if application were made, the High Court might order trials by special juries, thus securing a certain amount of education and intelligence in the jury. Accordingly the Government, mitigating the provisions of the Act of 1882, proposed that the Attorney General should have the right to nominate the county where a trial should take place, but if the accused could show just cause why the trial should not take place where the Attorney General elected, it lay with the Court to decide where the trial should take place. Could any provision be more fair? If it were not fair, what adjective could be applied to the Act of 1882? The other provision, to which he failed to see how exception could be taken, had reference to special jurors. This provision was not only fair, but such that if it were not what was called a "Coercion Bill," hon. Gentlemen discussing it in a private room would admit its reasonableness. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, writing on the 30th of October, 1886, said what his Government proposed when the Crimes Act expired was not absolutely to re-enact the clauses with reference to special jurors, change of venue, and Boycotting, but that the Viceroy should have the power to put them in force together or separately, as he saw fit. The present Bill adopted the suggestion that the Viceroy should put those provisions in force, but the Government had introduced safeguards not in the Act of 1882, rendering it impossible for anyone to suggest that they could be used oppressively by any Minister, as the Court could take the matter out of the Attorney General's hands if it thought fit. He was aware that the provision for the change of venue out of Ireland altogether had been criticized on all sides of the House; but, whatever other objections might have been raised to it, he had not heard any objection based upon the allegation that it would be unfair or unjust to a prisoner. English Members were satisfied with the administration of criminal justice in England, and hon. Members for Irish constituencies had often said they wished that prisoners should be tried in Ireland, exactly as they were in England. Well, in a certain class of cases which could not be considered political it was provided by the Bill—subject to the control of the Court and the certificate of the two principal Law Officers—that such cases might be brought to some part of England for trial if there were grounds for believing that they would be more fairly, justly, and equitably tried in this country. Only one objection had been made to this proposal. It was that it would excite for the criminals—[Mr. M. J. Kenny: Why criminals?—prisoners.]—well, prisoners charged with crimes—a degree of sympathy——

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): Every man appears to be a criminal in Ireland.

Mr. HOLMES: And that this sympathy would raise them to the position of political martyrs. He doubted that, but if it were so, surely that would not be unfair to the prisoners themselves, because it would tell in their favour, and they would have a better chance of escaping. He believed that Englishmen would try these cases justly and fairly. Personally, he hoped it would not be necessary to have frequent resort to the provision for removing cases to England; still he believed there were cases in which it would be absolutely necessary in order to secure a fair trial. He (Mr. Holmes) believed himself that the other provisions in the Bill would probably be sufficient, but he considered the power taken in the Bill to be absolutely necessary. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby in 1882, when proposing special juries and change of venue, also submitted as an alternative proposal trial by three Judges. Some of the Irish Judges had been denounced by Irish Members below the Gangway as political Judges, and therefore trial by Judges might not be acceptable to them. Still, it seemed necessary to the Government that they should have an alternative proposal for cases in which Irish juries could not be trusted to do justice, and that proposal was to remove the trials to England. Her Majesty's Government thought better not to deprive the prisoners of trial by jury, but to enable the trial to take place where there would be no fear on the part of the jurors or any sympathy with crime, and where it was admitted by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite that justice would be done. What was there in that provision which could remind any hon. Member of Russian despotism in Warsaw?

From the criticisms made upon the provisions of the Bill relating to summary jurisdiction it might be supposed that summary jurisdiction had never been heard of in England or Ireland at all. Surely hon. Members must be aware that a vast number of crimes were punishable summarily both in Ireland and in England; and the tendency of modern legislation had been greatly to increase the number of offences that could be summarily disposed of by fine or imprisonment. As far as he could gather from hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, they did not object so much to summary jurisdiction as to the character of the men who were to exercise it. But he would ask hon. Members to bear in mind who were the magistrates that at present exercised summary jurisdiction in Ireland. According to his recollection, in every single measure which had given summary jurisdiction that jurisdiction had been given to the ordinary Justices of Peace, men whom hon. Members opposite had denounced as belonging to the landlord class and as being against the people. Now the Government, in this Bill, had made a change in this respect; and the change they had made was that they had not left it to unpaid men, who might allow their feelings and prejudices to carry them away, but that, following the example given by the right hon. Gentleman opposite in his Bill, they had vested the power in the Resident Magistrates, who were directly responsible to the Government, as the Government were directly responsible to this House. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] It was the custom of hon. Members opposite to denounce these Resident Magistrates; but there were in the House several very distinguished Members who had been directly connected with the government of Ireland, including the right hon. Members for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) and Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley), and none of the attacks that had been made upon the Resident Magistrates had come from them, and none would come from them, because they knew the characters of those men and the manner of their selection and appointment. The hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington) amused the House very much by reading a number of letters which he said he had bought at an auction, containing applications to the Lord Lieutenant of the day for the place of Resident Magistrate. The Government had made inquiries into every one of those cases, and not in one single instance did the applicant whose letter was read by the hon. Member obtain an appointment.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): What about Mr. Fitzgerald?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. HOLMES: He was not appointed. He (Mr. Holmes) had with regret heard it stated in the House that the Resident Magistrates in Ireland were ordered and directed and interfered with in the discharge of their official duties by the Castle. He emphatically denied the truth of the statement. He appealed to right hon. Gentlemen opposite who had held office in Ireland to confirm him when he said—as he did with confidence—that such a thing as a direction given from Dublin Castle to a Resident Magistrate in reference to a judicial decision was wholly unknown, and also that the dismissal of a Resident Magistrate because of judicial decisions was also wholly unknown. On the contrary, the greatest care had always been taken to keep the judicial duties of the Resident Magistrate distinct from the duties of the Executive, and to insure that the magistrates should not be interfered with in any way or in the smallest degree in the discharge of their judicial functions. With regard to the extension of summary jurisdiction given by the Bill, he contended that it was a reasonable extension, and said that every reasonable safeguard had been taken against abuse or unfairness in the exercise of the power. Among the offences to be dealt with under those provisions was unlawful assembly, which was now of frequent occurrence. It was well that that class of offence should be dealt with summarily, probably by short sentences, and a similar provision was to be found in the Act of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. Assaulting a constable or obstructing a Sheriff or his officer was another offence to be dealt with summarily. Obstructing a constable in England was punishable by summary jurisdiction, and he maintained that it was only reasonable to apply the provision to the case of obstructing a Sheriff's officer in Ireland as well as to assaulting a constable. With reference to the provisions which dealt with intimidation and Boycotting, he might point out that the principal one had been taken from the Bill of 1882. He would now say a word or two about the provisions of the Bill relating to dangerous societies or associations. [An hon. MEMBER: The Whiteboy Acts.] With regard to the Whiteboy Acts, the provisions would be laid upon the Table of the House to-night by his right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and hon. Members would have an opportunity of reading them, and they would find that there was not one of the Whiteboy offences dealt with by them which was not at present a crime in England. He admitted that in times past very serious punishments were attached to them in Ireland, but a great many of those punishments had been repealed. What the Government had done was simply to take the offences referred to, which were offences not only in Ireland, but in England also, and include them under the Summary Jurisdiction Clauses, and the House would see when it read the Acts that those offences were most reasonable cases for summary jurisdiction. As to the power given by the Bill for the proclamation of dangerous societies, he admitted that there was no precedent for their provision regarding the proclamation of dangerous associations, but there was a precedent for far more stringent powers in the measure introduced in 1881, and in that introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. Under the former measure the Lord Lieutenant could by a warrant under his hand direct any man to be arrested, whether he belonged to a dangerous society or not, and the 9th section of the latter Act declared that every person who was known to be a member of an unlawful association or took part in it would be guilty of an offence against the Act and should be amenable to summary punishment. The proclamation of a dangerous society by the Lord Lieutenant under this Bill would be subject to a double provision for the protection of the subject, for after it was issued it would be placed before the House, and hon. Members would have the opportunity of fully examining it, and the responsible officer of the Government in this House would have to defend it. The hon. and learned Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) suggested that the Government should describe by name in the Bill the dangerous association, and should declare that association to be unlawful. But there was one objection to that. A name could be very easily changed in a day; and if they proclaimed an association to-day they would find in apostolical succession another association following it. Moreover, a particular association might be harmless in one part of the country, while in other parts it might be used for the purposes described in the Bill. It was only where an association acted in the way indicated in the Bill that it would become the subject of proclamation, and the proclamation itself would be subject to the control of Parliament. As he had trespassed so long on the attention of the House there was only one subject more to which he would refer. A charge was brought against the Bill that it differed from other Bills of the kind in being a perpetual measure. In his opinion—and, he believed, in the opinion of many—the great misfortune of past measures for reforming the Criminal Law in Ireland was that those measures were not what was termed perpetual. What was the justification of such a measure? It was that it was necessary for amending the Criminal Law, and therefore it ought to continue in force as long as the necessity for the measure existed. Did any man possess such gifts of prophecy as to be able to say how long such an Act might be necessary? But there was no such thing, in the proper sense of the word, as a perpetual Act of Parliament. Every Act of Parliament should continue as long as the necessity for it existed, and every Act of Parliament could be repealed, and ought to be repealed, when the necessity for it existed no longer. That was the measure of the continuance of a Statute. This Bill would be perpetual as long as Parliament wished it to continue in force; it would cease to be perpetual as soon as Parliament wished to repeal it. Although it might suit the exigencies of Party to apply an offensive term to this Bill and call it a measure of coercion, he thought when it was looked at carefully and properly it would be found that such an epithet was not applicable; and if that were so, what became of the strictures made upon the measure in the course of the debate? Those strictures had certainly not been properly directed against the measure and the remedy which the Government had brought forward, and the more the matter was considered by the people of this country and by the House, the more it would be seen that what the Government proposed was a fair, just, and reasonable method in the circumstances of the case in Ireland.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said, he intended to oppose the second reading of the Bill, and to support the Amendment of his hon. Friend. But he thought he ought to make three admissions. The first admission was that some of the minor clauses of the Bill, provided the measure was to become part of the general law of the country, were not objectionable. His second admission was that he agreed with many who thought that there was much in the state of Ireland for some time past which they ought to deplore; and, for his part, he could not assent to a great deal which had been done in connection with the Plan of Campaign. But in making that admission he was bound to remind the House that the state of things in Ireland to which objection was taken arose, in his judgment, and in the judgment of many others, out of the unfortunate and peremptory rejection of the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) last Session—a Bill rejected on grounds now to a great extent admitted to be worthless, and which, if it had been read a second time and allowed to go into Committee, would have prevented many of the unfortunate results which they had seen during the last few months. Therefore, although two blacks did not make a white, he could not assent to the doctrine that all which had happened in Ireland during the last year in opposition to the law was due to the Irish themselves, for much of it was owing to the unwise action of that House. Then, thirdly, he would admit that there had been in Ireland a certain, although inconsiderable, increase of crime during the last year which was to be deplored. But, he would ask, what increase of crime had the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland shown to the House to-night which justified the provisions of this Bill? The right hon. and learned Gentleman produced a great effect by showing the number of applications for compensation which had been made in Kerry at the last Spring Assizes, stating that, especially as regarded the damage done to cattle, they amounted to 86. The House, however, had on the Table a Return which gave some information on that subject. He held in his hand the Return of the number of outrages reported to the Constabulary during the last two quarters of the year, not for Kerry only, but for the whole of Ireland. The total number of injuries to cattle for all Ireland during the third quarter of last year was 27, and in the fourth quarter 9; so that in the six months from July to December the total number in all Ireland of cases of killing, cutting, or maiming cattle was 36. But how many of these were in Kerry? In the third quarter, from July to the end of September, the number was 5, and in the fourth quarter it was "nil." Those were the Returns which he had to set against the formidable figures quoted by the right hon. and learned Gentleman. The right hon. and learned Gentleman would, of course, lay before the House the Paper he had read, and would enable them, he (Mr. Childers) hoped, before the Division, to verify his remarkable figures. They would then be able to ascertain how the Constabulary had been so entirely at fault as to report only five cases.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Holmes) (Dublin University) said, he did not wish to convey to the House that the whole of the 86 cases referred to outrages on cattle. What he intended to say was that there were 86 malicious outrages, but he would only quote the cases which referred to cattle. He would, however, lay the Paper upon the Table, and he thought it would show that he had been correct.

Mr. CHILDERS said, that the right hon. and learned Gentleman's explanation was quite fair as far as it went; but he would remind him that he had quoted no case except that of cattle.

Mr. HOLMES: I confined myself to cattle.

Mr. CHILDERS said, he had a further admission to make, and that was that in former Parliaments he had supported, not, he thought, by speech, but by vote, Coercion Bills for Ireland; and therefore he was open to the charge of inconsistency in opposing, as he meant to do, this Bill as a whole. But he was bound to say that of those Gentlemen whom he saw sitting opposite on the Front Bench, he did not think anyone could throw that charge in his teeth, unless it were the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin). He believed, also, that no less than 90 Gentlemen now sitting on the opposite side of the House had, at the General Election of 1885, and a good many in 1886, gone to their constituents with the cry of "No coercion." "No coercion" was the principal plank in their platform at that time, and, having regard to this fact, it certainly did not lie with the Party opposite to speak of inconsistency. Lord Salisbury himself, shortly before the Election, made a clear statement of his views. Speaking in October, 1885, he said—

> "You have passed an Act of Parliament, giving, with unexampled abundance and freedom, supreme power to the great mass of the Irish people. To my mind, the renewal of exceptional legislation against a population whom you had treated legislatively with this marked confidence would be a gross inconsistency. The only result would be to produce so intense an exasperation among the Irish people as would have caused ten times more evil, ten times more resistance to the law, than your Crimes Act could possibly have availed to check."

The noble Marquess was not the only Member of the Party opposite who gave very clear reasons for refusing to re-enact the Coercion Bill. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) said that his policy would be to "conciliate by equal laws our Irish brethren." The right hon. Baronet, whose absence they all regretted—the late Chief Secretary for Ireland — said he was in favour of "equal laws steadfastly upheld in Ireland by a just and sympathetic Government." Some days later, in November, 1885, Lord Salisbury declared that "the experiment of relying in Ireland on the ordinary law has been decidedly a success," and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington about the same time said that "the decision had been abundantly justified," and that the "Boycotting which had occurred would not warrant the abridgment of Constitutional liberty." While referring to those statements, he should like to point out a very pointed contradiction between the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Salisbury. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had recently stated that Boycotting increased threefold immediately on the expiration of the Crimes Act in August, 1885; and he said that that was proved by the figures of the quarter to the end of September, 1885; but that was diametrically opposed to what Lord Salisbury said on the 7th of October, 1885—namely—

> "I have seen it stated that the Crimes Act diminished Boycotting. It is not true. I have had a Return of all the outrages in September, during which the Act was not in existence, and outrages were considerably fewer than in August, when the Act was in existence."

He hoped, sooner or later, that that curious and grave difference of opinion between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister upon the same statistics would be cleared up. But there were other grounds for opposition to this Bill besides the inconsistency of the supporters of the Government. The present Bill differed from all previous Bills of the kind in this—that it was opposed by five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland. He doubted whether, on the occasion of any previous Crimes Bill, half the Irish Members had opposed it. In fact, he could find no Division in which above 45 out of 105 were in the minority. It was also practically admitted that there was no great increase of crime. There was a third objection which, to his mind, was very strong indeed, and that was that this Bill made a permanent change in the law. This was not a temporary expedient to meet an exceptional state of things. There had been cases in which it had been possible to justify temporarily extreme remedies for extreme diseases; but this was a Bill to permanently alter the Criminal Law of Ireland, and make it essentially different from the Criminal Law administered in England. The doctrine which had been put forward as specially justifying the Union was that there ought to be identity of laws with England. One of Mr. Pitt's chief arguments in favour of the Act of Union, besides its military necessity, was that it would insure the same laws for the two countries. He urged this not once but frequently, and it had great influence on the Parliament of England. He had often heard, when he was a young Member, Mr. Whiteside point out that those who wished to maintain the Union ought to insist on identical laws for the two countries. In 1819, when Lord Sidmouth introduced the Six Acts, notwithstanding that he had an enormous Tory majority, he told the House of Commons that though he should like to make the two principal Acts permanent, yet that it would be so inconsistent with Constitutional principles that Acts levelled at a special outburst of crime and violence should be permanent that he dared not propose this. Lord Grey, in 1833, introduced in the House of Lords a Coercion Bill which, in some particulars, was even more stringent than the present measure, and he supported it by saying that "a free Government might, when the safety of the State was concerned. suspend for a time, but only for a time, the ordinary law." The proposal to make this Bill permanent was, therefore, an infraction of Constitutional principles which he hoped the House would not countenance. But even if this were only to be a temporary measure, there were very grave objections to parts of it, as an examination of its details would show. In the first place, power was given to any single magistrate to examine witnesses as to any offence committed, although no person stood charged. The justification advanced for this provision was that it existed in a certain sense in the Scottish law, and also in the French law and the law of other countries. Presuming there was some argument for this proposal, let them see who the magistrate was who was to have this power. The result of the Bill really was that any Resident Magistrate, however ignorant of law he might be, would have this power of taking evidence, for the Resident Magistrate, under this section, was not bound to satisfy the Lord Lieutenant of his legal knowledge, as under Section 12. In Scotland the only persons who had this power were trained lawyers, who had experience in the Law of Evidence. [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR dissented.] He observed the Chief Secretary shake his head. Probably he referred to the examination of Mr. Butler in *The Heart of Mid Lothian* — an examination which certainly was not very favourable, if it was a fair specimen of the practice, to this provision. That may have been a fair sample of the proceedings of that time; but at present it was not so, and those who conducted those examinations in Scotland were trained and experienced lawyers. The same was the case in foreign countries, as any reader of *causes célèbres* would know. In France the magistrate who made these inquiries was undoubtedly one of the most experienced and trained officials, and these examinations were conducted with extraordinary care. There was no such provision in this Bill, under which the inquiry might be conducted by a person who was absolutely ignorant of the law; and, in contradistinction to the Scotch practice, any such witness might be charged afterwards, although his own evidence could not be used against him. There was another special objection to this provision, urged by Lord Carnarvon, who said in the House of Lords in 1885 that if such a provision were permanent it would be necessary to make it of general and universal application, and not confine it to certain districts. He passed to the proposals for summary jurisdiction. He admitted that some classes of assault now going to a Judge and jury might, perhaps, go to two magistrates if this change were made for the whole Kingdom. But from what they knew of the Whiteboy Acts, it seemed to him it would be a most monstrous thing that a person should be convicted under the provisions of those Acts by two magistrates. Those Acts contained most tyrannical and extreme provisions. Again, there was one particular class of offences as to which the fullest reasons should be given before they entrusted two magistrates with jurisdiction in regard to them. That was the class of offences comprised in the word "conspiracy." He never heard two lawyers agree as to what conspiracy really was. All lawyers admitted that it denoted an offence to which it was impossible to ascribe any but the vaguest limits, and that the right definition, in many instances, must depend, to a very great extent, on the acumen and care of the learned Judge who tried the case. Fancy giving magistrates power to deal with so shadowy an offence! There was another provision which would require great care on the part of the House. Summary jurisdiction was to be granted to a magistrate in cases

> "Where any person by word or act incites, solicits, encourages, or persuades any other person to do any of the offences before mentioned."

That covered almost every possible writing in a newspaper, or a letter in favour of combination against excessive rents. He could not conceive anything more dangerous than that the liberties of the people should depend on the interpretation which two magistrates might put upon such words; and on that point he thought they were bound to have, sooner or later, explanations from the Government. He would pass to another important provision of the Bill. It was curious that the words of the Bill as to the change of venue from one county in Ireland to another were not the same as the words in the Act of 1882. Under the clause now proposed, it would be competent for the Attorney General to bring a Catholic peasant from Cork or Kerry before a jury of Protestants in Ulster, on the ground not that he would not have in Kerry or Cork a "fair and impartial" trial, but that a "fairer and more impartial" trial would thus be secured. What did these words mean? Could anyone doubt that they meant a trial by a larger proportion of Protestants? He should much prefer the re-enactment of the words of the Change of Venue (Ireland) Act, 1833—

> "It shall be lawful for His Majesty's Court of King's Bench, upon the application of His Majesty's Attorney General, or upon the petition of any prosecutor, prisoner, or traverser, such application or petition being verified by affidavits showing that an impartial trial cannot be had in the county, to make order that the person named in the indictment shall be tried by the jury of any adjoining county or by a jury of the City of Dublin."

The clause dealing with the change of venue to England was, in his opinion, a most extraordinary one. Imagine any Irish Roman Catholic prisoner being brought to Liverpool, and tried by a jury of Lancashire Orangemen? Where had the Chief Secretary found a precedent for this proposal? Had he found it in the unfortunate attempt which was made before the American War of Independence to remove cases from America into English Courts?—an enactment denounced by Burke with all the force of his eloquence. Was the origin to be found in Cromwell's Act of Union with Scotland, under which he sent English Judges in 1552 o go Circuit in Scotland? Or was it in Mr. Grenville's Act, which took away, in America, the trial of Revenue cases from a Judge and jury, and gave it to a British Court of Vice Admiralty, one of the first causes, according to Mr. O'Connell, of the loss of the Colonies? But, whatever its origin, he strongly protested against it as being the very worst provision in the Bill. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland had said that the Bill was so good that it might be applied with advantage to any part of Her Majesty's Dominions. But he (Mr. Childers) asked any hon. Member of the House what would be the effect of a Bill which should enable the Government to send English prisoners for trial wherever they thought fit? What would have been the effect, in the days when certain of our Possessions in France returned Members to that House, of a proposal to try in England prisoners from our Possessions in France, or English prisoners in France? About 30 or 40 years ago, even in the case of a small Possession, when it was attempted to try a Jerseyman in this country, there was such an outcry that the Government had to abandon the idea ignominiously, and the Jerseyman was sent back to be tried in his own island. In this clause the Government seemed entirely to have ignored the existence of national feeling; for if he read Clause 15 aright they actually desired to enact that the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish Privy Council—they knew what sort of a body that was—should have power to regulate the proceedings of the English Courts in the trial of prisoners from Ireland. He earnestly hoped the Government did not intend to be guilty of so flagrant a disregard of first principles as to insist on these proposals. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Roxburgh (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) was conscious of the unpopularity of these proposals, and suggested that in cases of disagreement by the jury the prisoner should be tried by a Commission of three Judges. The effect of such a course would obviously be that in grave cases juries, anxious to give a prisoner another chance, always would disagree, and in capital and other heavy offences jury trial would thus virtually be abolished. That was a result which no one could desire. The Attorney General for Ireland had given the strongest reason against the change of venue which had yet been suggested—

—namely, that it would make martyrs of the prisoners so tried.

MR. HOLMES said, that the right hon. Gentleman had misunderstood him. What he did say was that this was the argument used by the other side with which he did not agree.

MR. CHILDERS reminded the right hon. and learned Gentleman that he had said it would not be a bad thing.

MR. HOLMES said, in answer to the objection, that he had pointed out that it would be no disadvantage to the prisoner to be considered a martyr.

MR. CHILDERS said, he hoped that neither the proposal of the Government nor that of the hon. and learned Member for Roxburgh would be accepted by the House; and he had a suspicion that so much had already been said against the provision that it was not unlikely that it would be dropped. The next part of the Bill was that which dealt with dangerous associations. He was quite prepared to admit that if there existed associations of a distinctly criminal character it might be reasonable in times of great excitement to make temporary provisions against such associations. But this Bill was to be permanent and give the Lord Lieutenant power to suppress "any associations which he might believe to be dangerous." But he would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman to consider the words of Sections 6 and 19. Those sections included under the term "dangerous associations" any which "promoted acts calculated to put any person in fear of loss of business." Why, a railway was very much "calculated" to put all stage coaches in fear of of loss of business, and according to the words of this clause an association to promote the construction of a new railway would be liable to be suppressed. Undoubtedly the Primrose League was an association likely to put some persons in fear of losing their business, and it had, to his personal knowledge, in many cases produced this result. In fact, the net was thrown too wide, for it was obvious that the words he had quoted would include a great deal more than was contemplated. These were, however, points that could be discussed in Committee, and he warned the Government that they would be very narrowly watched. He would not deal with the clauses relating to the Whiteboy offences, because a promise had been made to lay on the Table an exact description of the intended application of the Bill. But he would remark that the Whiteboy Acts on their face included provisions which were entirely unsuitable to the circumstances of the present day. Summing up, then, his objections to and criticisms of the Bill, he would say that it undoubtedly contained provisions which might properly be allowed to pass into law if they were made applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom. But experience taught that the severe and drastic legislation which was contained in the Bill would prove absolutely futile. This was proved to be the case by the absolute failure of Lord Sidmouth's Six Acts in 1819. Then the Catholic Association was put down in 1825, and three or four years afterwards the Duke of Wellington himself was compelled to grant Catholic Emancipation by the force of Irish agitation. Again, it could not be pretended for a moment that the state of things now was at all similar to that which existed in 1833, when Lord Grey thus described the condition of Ireland—

> "A spirit of insubordination and violence has risen to the most fearful height, rendering life and property insecure, and threatening the most fatal consequences. . . . . In one year 9,002 crimes have been committed in Ireland, and the number is rapidly increasing."

At that time, in the House of Commons, Mr. Stanley said that, in the last three months of 1832, crime was five-fold that of 1829; and Sir Robert Peel enumerated the chief offences in one year as follows:—196 murders, 194 burnings, and 1,287 burglaries. What was the condition of Ireland now? On the 31st of January last, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) said—

> "Ireland is now practically free from crime, which has been reduced to, and even below, a normal level."

And in 1885 the noble Lord said—

> "The best plan was to conciliate by equal laws our Irish brethren rather than to coerce them."

About the same time, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) said—

> "The pacification of Ireland depends, in my belief, on the concession to Ireland of the right to govern itself in the matter of its purely domestic business,"

—words with which he (Mr. Childers) quite agreed. To go a good deal further back, Lord Bacon had laid down the axiom that "the sure way to prevent sedition is to take away the matter of it." How was it, then, possible to justify a Bill like this? For his own part, he was not in favour of the repeal of the Union. On the contrary, he believed that the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament must be maintained, and he was altogether opposed to the disruption of the Empire. But all experience told us that, whether in a great Colonial Empire, or in a compact State containing divers Nationalities, centralization only tended to peril. It was the concession of local liberties which was the safeguard against disorder. Such a concession had proved successful in former days in Holland, and in the present century in Hungary and in Canada. He supported a moderate and well-considered plan of Home Rule—the right of Ireland to govern itself in regard to purely domestic matters; and he much preferred such a plan to the alternate doses of flattery and coercion which have been the rule during the present century. Firmly believing that this concession would be justified by its results, he earnestly recommended it as the best policy for Parliament to adopt.

Mr. SHAW-STEWART (Renfrew, E.) said, he would ask for that indulgence which was always accorded to a Member addressing the House for the first time. He hoped to be able to reply to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Childers) with the respect which was due from a new Member to one who had been so long in the House as the right hon. Gentleman. At the commencement of his speech the right hon. Gentleman said that a certain number of Members of the Conservative Party went to the country on a cry of "No Coercion!" but he hoped, whatever certain Members of the Party might have said, to be able to show what Lord Salisbury and the Leaders of the Party said at the Election with regard to coercion. One of the objections which were taken to this Bill, and had been urged by the last speaker, was that there was not sufficient crime in Ireland to justify this Bill. But the case of the Government was that the crime which did exist could not be punished by the laws as they at present stood. The right hon. Gentleman had also alluded shortly to certain provisions in the Scotch Law, and he (Mr. Shaw-Stewart) ventured to address the House as a Representative from that part of the United Kingdom, where some of the provisions of the law were very similar to some of the provisions in this Bill. He did not venture to expound the details of the Scotch Law; there were two Members of the Government who were far better qualified than a layman like himself to point out the similarity of these provisions of the Bill to the law under which they in Scotland lived, or, if hon. Members preferred it, were coerced; but as to the first clause of the Bill, which provided for a preliminary inquiry previous to trial, exactly the same thing existed in Scotland. ["No, no!"] Yes, yes; not in a proclaimed district, but over the whole country; not on the initiative of the Lord Advocate, but on the initiative of a local public officer, whom they called the Procurator-Fiscal. The Procurators-Fiscal could, upon information obtained from the police, or even from private individuals, conduct a preliminary inquiry, and, if necessary, the attendance of witnesses at that inquiry was enforced by the Sheriff. If the circumstances required it, they could be examined on oath. He had never heard any objection to the working of that law, although he had no doubt a good many criminals had found it, to say the least, inconvenient. He believed this provision was admirably adapted to the detection of crime, and that was one of the objects which it was most desirable to secure in Ireland at the present time. The list of agrarian offences from January to December last year amounted to a total of 1,056. Out of this total there were only 64 convicted and 87 made amenable, while 899 were neither convicted nor made amenable. That showed the necessity for increased detection of crime; and if such a provision as he had referred to became law in Ireland, detection of crime would become much more rapid and efficacious. They had also change of venue in Scotland. In cases of breaking into houses, or rioting, or assault, the Crown Counsel could, if he thought fit, have the panel tried in another district. [An hon. Member: Not in London.] No; not in London, but in Edinburgh. He dared say they would not be afraid to come to London to be tried. Of course, no one could deny that the present Bill went beyond the provisions of the Scottish law. But who was to blame for that? He maintained that it was those who stirred up Ireland to resist the law. The real creators of the Bill were not the Gentlemen sitting on the Treasury Bench, but those who had stirred up Ireland during the winter. Our quarrel was not with the people of Ireland, but with criminals and instigators to crime. The stringency of this Bill was in proportion to the strength of the organization that existed in Ireland. The Government must be stronger than that organization. They must be stronger than the National League. We could not afford in Ireland or anywhere else to make terms with crime. He did not wonder that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite felt a certain amount of pride in having forced the Government to bring forward this Bill; but at the same time they must have some misgivings that the Bill would prove too strong for them. For his part, if he were an Irish agitator, he should hate the sight of this Bill, because the moment the Queen's Law prevailed in Ireland peace would prevail, and the agitator's occupation would be gone. They were told that the Government had no business to bring in this Bill; but were Parliamentary pledges to go for nothing? He maintained that the Government had absolutely no choice in the matter. At the commencement of the present Parliament the Government most distinctly pledged themselves to try to govern Ireland by the ordinary law, and declared that if they failed in the endeavour they would come to Parliament for further powers. That was stated by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill) on the 19th of August, 1886. They were not only pledged to Parliament, but they were acting consistently with the case as it stood before the country at the last General Election. At Leeds, on the 19th of June, very soon after Parliament was dissolved, Lord Salisbury spoke on this very question. He said they had not recommended that anybody should be punishable except for a proved breach of the Criminal Law. This was in answer to the charge that he had recommended coercion. "Whoever," Lord Salisbury asked, "heard of pursuing an anti-coercion policy with burglars?" And he added—

> "All we desire is that the law should be sufficiently businesslike and efficacious to carry out its own behests."

The late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) had also, in his Election address, said—

> "We are told that the adoption of the policy now offered to the country is but the concession to Ireland of her just rights, and that the only alternative is coercion. I hold that the rights of Ireland in this matter are neither more nor less than those of Great Britain. The Irishmen are endowed as largely with political rights and are as free to use them as Englishmen or Scotchmen; but neither in Great Britain nor Ireland can political organizations be permitted to gain their ends through intimidation backed by outrage and crime. To prevent this is the plain duty of any Government, for it is not coercion, but the necessary vindication of constitutional freedom."

He contended that the Government were acting consistently in this matter. They had given the ordinary law in Ireland a fair trial. They had tried to govern Ireland by the ordinary law for eight months, honestly and consistently, and with forbearance. They had failed, and who was to blame but those who had stirred up Ireland during the winter against the law? In the face of these facts, he believed it was the duty of the Government to bring in this Bill; and notwithstanding what they sometimes heard in the House about the attachment of Scotsmen to the Separatist cause, he believed he spoke for large numbers of his countrymen when he said that notwithstanding their dislike to the necessity for a Bill of this kind, they believed that the Bill should be passed with the smallest possible delay. The hon. Member for Wexford (Mr. J. Redmond) the other night said—"What have we in Ireland to be loyal to?" What had they in England and Scotland to be loyal to? Speaking generally, he should say they were loyal to the Crown; but loyalty to the Crown went deeper than personal attachment to the Sovereign. They were loyal to the Crown because they looked to the Crown as the representative of, and the guarantee for, civilized law. Very few hon. Members would gainsay that civilized law was at a discount in Ireland, and he believed this Bill would go far to restore it. When once civilized law was established in Ireland, then Irishmen could dare to be loyal, the Crown would have no more loyal subjects in its Dominions than the Irish. They heard a great deal about the national aspirations of the Irish. He did not think his countrymen had ever been charged with a want of national aspirations; on the contrary, they were very sensitive in their national feelings, and very jealous of their national rights; but they were not so foolish as to be blind to the immense advantage of forming a part of the Imperial Parliament, and they seized every opportunity of bringing before Parliament their grievances, and seeking useful and wise legislation in a quiet and practical manner. Why could not Irish Members do the same? Let them abandon dangerous agitation, and there would be no Coercion Bills. Let them use their undoubted talents in promoting the interests of their own country in a lawful and peaceable manner, so that the three countries bound together so closely by nature would become bound together still more closely in the promotion of the real welfare of mankind. He would only add, in conclusion, that they in Scotland desired to see the Irish enjoy the same rights and privileges as themselves; but that could not be so long as the cruel and selfish law of the National League was allowed to exist in Ireland. He should vote for this Bill, because he believed it would break the power of the National League, and so clear the way for many wise and useful measures for the whole United Kingdom—measures which were postponed now, but which all the Three Kingdoms were anxious to see passed by that House.

MR. MUNRO-FERGUSON (Leith, &c.) said, he agreed with what had been said by the hon. Member opposite as to the Scottish people having sympathy with national aspirations, because at the General Election the Scottish people returned a majority of Members favourable to the aspirations of the people of Ireland. The hon. Member had also informed the House as to some of the provisions of the Scottish law. He was not a lawyer; but he ventured to say that if anyone examined the Scottish law, they would not find very much wrong in it; and that what was in the Scottish law could be applied to England and Ireland, probably with advantage to both. But there was very little in the Crimes Bill which was found in Scottish law at all; and if the Crimes Bill were to be applied to Scotland, he ventured to say there would be very considerable disturbance in that country. There had been agrarian disturbances in the Highlands; but what would occur in the North of Scotland if crofters were brought to London for trial, or if such summary powers were given to the magistrates there as were contained in this Bill? The only power Scottish Sheriffs had was to sentence to two months' imprisonment, and their power was intended not for the suppression of political associations, but for the trial of petty offenders. He was a believer in the enforcing of the law; but the question was what kind of law did the Government propose to enforce? He could not think that the change of venue of prisoners to England would be tamely submitted to in Ireland. The weakness of the position of the Government was not the stringency of the Bill, but it lay in the weakness of the case which the Government brought forward in support of the Bill. The more protracted the debate was, the more it became clear that the Bill before the House was a bad Bill, and no serious attempt had yet been made to justify it. Hon. Gentlemen opposite thought to justify their case by quotations. The speeches of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) had been literally quarried for quotations; and hon. Members opposite seemed to imagine that by quoting a few paragraphs from speeches made between 1831 and 1881, and by a few extracts from Law Reports in Ireland, that the case for the Bill was established and the Opposition policy was condemned; but signs were not wanting already that the same ignominious policy of scuttle was being adopted with regard to this Coercion Bill as they witnessed with regard to the policy of 20 years' resolute government. As had been said by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian—"A good, strong Coercion Bill might be effective; but no sooner was it introduced than it seemed to melt away." The Government sought to demolish the Opposition case by bringing counter-charges against them. They said that the Opposition encouraged obstruction in the House by an alliance with the Nationalist Members from Ireland, and they accused them also of changing their attitude. He frankly admitted that there had been considerable modifications of the views he had held upon the Irish Question; but to justify such a change, one had to prove that the new position was a right one, and everything had tended towards Home Rule in Ireland since 1885. They had only to remember the attitude of the Tory Party towards coercion in the autumn of that year, and in the Election of 1885, and the return of 86 Irish Nationalist Members. Unless they had thrown overboard their belief in Representative Institutions, he failed to see how they could adopt any other course with regard to the Irish Question. They thought it was their duty to concede, and they formulated their concession. If the concession was larger than they should like, it was because of the injudicious coercion in the past; and they held that now the Government were making it more difficult for the two nations to come together. As to their so-called alliance with the Nationalist Members from Ireland—which, after the events of 1885, might be described almost as accidental—so long as the Irish Members pursued a policy which was not incompatible with the interests of the Empire, why should there be no understanding between hon. Members from one part of the United Kingdom and hon. Members from another part? The policy of the Opposition was at least as honourable as was the policy of the Conservative Party in 1885. Was it a more honourable understanding under which the policy of Lord Spencer was repudiated by hon. Members opposite? Should they not rather endeavour to draw Nationalist Members from Ireland within the pale of British politics? He believed, as the result of the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, a great and favourable change of feeling had occurred; that, by a clear and honest understanding between hon. Members from Ireland and hon. Members on that side of the House, much had been done to bring them, in fact as well as in name, within the bonds of the Union of the Empire. Hon. Members on the Ministerial Benches seemed to think that it was by such Bills as these that the affections of the people would be gained. The Solicitor General had said that if they looked deep enough into the question of the administration of the law in Ireland, they would find that Boycotting had something to do with the difficulties experienced in that direction; but he submitted that was not enough, and that they should look deeper still, and find out what was the origin of Boycotting. The cause of Boycotting was misrule, broken promises after the Union, and the maintenance of a land system which was utterly unsuited to the social state of Ireland. It was to these that they must attribute the growth of the evils which now oppressed Ireland. It was not by the suppression of discontent, but by the freeing of existing institutions, that the cure would be found; and they could not govern a country by continually recurring to coercion. Something might be said for an autocratic Government in the right place, but that place was certainly not Ireland, where the people had the same desire for free institutions as they had. Perhaps the question of land purchase was one more interlaced with the Coercion Bill than any other; but he did not believe that land purchase could be egged on by coercion. He believed coercion would be fatal to that transfer of the land from the owner to the occupier which alone would bring about a permanent settlement of the social and agrarian difficulties in Ireland. The landlords might find out that they missed their chance last year of a fair and equitable settlement; and he felt sure that without any intermediate authority in Ireland, without some sound guarantee, no land purchase could be carried out in Ireland. The case of the Government and of the Unionists was a hopeless case. The time of the House, which in former years had been used with the best intentions, though not with the good results they had hoped for, would this year be given up to a barren Session. He did not think the people of Great Britain would long submit to the Parliamentary machine being reduced to a state of impotence. He believed it would be found before long that the people of Scotland were far from satisfied with the share of legislation which they were enabled to receive from that House. The Members of the Unionist Party, in supporting this Bill, no longer considered the connection between remedial and coercive measures. Those Members of the Unionist Party who imagined that they could exhaust the demands of the Irish people without any resort to force were in a position which could only be compared to that of some members of the Peace Society, who, in the present unfortunate state of the world, would find their opinions equally impracticable and valueless. The principle of Home Rule had been approved in Scotland. Scotland and the Scottish people knew how advantageous it would be, not to Ireland only, but to the interests of the Empire at large, as well as of benefit in promoting a wholesome feeling among the English-speaking race everywhere. By the attitude of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, the Members for Ireland had a hope that their reasonable desires might obtain the ear of the House. Scottish Members held very strong ground in opposing the measures which the Government had introduced. Scotsmen knew the value both of time and money, and they knew that both were being wasted in that House by the introduction of these measures for Ireland and by the impossibility of society settling down on any solid or permanent basis. The struggle which was now going on was disastrous to Parliamentary institutions and to Ireland, and it was disastrous to the whole English-speaking race. The introduction of American gold into Ireland had been objected to by the Tories; but they never objected to it so long as it was used for purposes of emigration. It was surely a high aim to seek to consolidate the English-speaking race throughout the world; and it was a parochial view of the case to assert that the granting of local institutions to Ireland would upset the British Empire. He spoke as an Imperialist as well as a Liberal, and, holding these views, he voted for Home Rule. That might seem singular to Members who opposed Home Rule; but the policy of the Tory Party had been a singular one, when they sat like a set of dummies, and allowed the Australian and American Colonies to pass away from them. The Empire should be maintained, not as a rotten body that required to be lashed up, but it should be maintained by mutual interests and mutual devotion. As it was, the present unhappy contest might end in loss of strength and influence, and in the lowering of national credit and prosperity, which it was the duty of every patriot to create and maintain.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE (St. Pancras, N.): It has been stated by those who hold the views of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) that at the last Election many Conservative candidates pledged themselves to vote against coercion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) has also brought to-night, as his chief charge against the Government, that they are falsifying their Election pledges by the introduction of this Criminal Law Amendment Bill. A similar accusation was made yesterday by the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart) at the meeting in Hyde Park, of which he was Chairman, and which, by all accounts, seems to have fallen rather flat. If it is a true fact that we, on this side of the House, repudiated the idea of coercion at the last Election, how do hon. Members opposite account for their Election speeches being a constant reiteration, that our only policy was one of coercion? If they are speaking the truth now, they must have been guilty of the grossest mis-representation, and of a desire to mislead the people at the Elections. Their case is stronger when they say we declared that we wished to have equal laws for the Three Kingdoms. So we do now. We want the spirit, the intention of our laws to have equal effect in the Three Kingdoms. The sought-for change at the present time arises from the working of our laws being checked in one of the Three Kingdoms, owing to some untoward circumstances hampering the machinery. Our endeavours are towards removing this friction. Amongst these untoward circumstances, which is the most important? It is the influence of of the National League. For my part, so great do I consider that influence, that I believe once the actions of that body are restrained or nullified by the provisions of the Bill, the remaining provisions will hardly require to be put into operation. I know the power of the League hon. Members opposite now find it convenient to deny. For instance, in Boycotting, in intimidation, or in the starting of the Plan of Campaign, we are told not to look for the National League. I think that its members are too modest. I give them much greater credit. If they were so ineffective as they choose now to represent themselves, they have been guilty of obtaining their money from America under false pretences, and should be charged by their subscribers for misappropriation of funds. But this is not the case; they are too powerful in Ireland, and though the state of terrorism they have originated may be denied, I believe that which the right hon. Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) laughed at as an absurdity—namely, that the priests themselves are, in many cases, amongst those who are terrorized—to be a fact. They headed this movement originally, unconscious of the length they would be forced to go; they are now driven and coerced by the National League to be supporters of their actions. Again, in the matter of juries, the power of the League has been felt, and a system which works well in this country is, in Ireland, rendered a farce. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, in his speech during the first stage of the Bill, when referring to the proposed change of venue, remarked how dangerous it was, when dealing with the jury system, to retain the form whilst sacrificing the substance of the system. Is not that danger fully shown in the present action of juries in Ireland, where you do, indeed, have the form, but not the substance or essence? This surely justifies the Government in proposing some remedy to get rid of a mockery of justice. Intimidation depends upon the amount of force behind it, and the likelihood of that force being used. The National League have that force, and are not slow to use it. When the Bill is passed, Boycotting, though it may be impossible to entirely suppress it, will certainly not be able to be set in motion by direct and open incitement in the manner as reported in to-day's papers, the hon. Member for County Cork (Mr. Parnell) is endeavouring to do. The Boycotting in Ireland has been foolishly compared with Boycotting by the Primrose League. For my part, I have never heard of a single authenticated case by the latter; and, secondly, do not see what good it could do when you have the Ballot used properly, and in its entirety in this country. Boycotting is carried on not only by threats at election time, but against men who are only anxious to obtain a livelihood. The Plan of Campaign was due solely to incitement, in proof of which there is evidence of tenants being ready to pay rents, till the originators of the Plan came to disturb them. In December last, the hon. Member for North Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond) boasted of their having forced the Government to lay aside the ordinary law, and resort to coercion. Again, the right hon. Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne, in a speech made this Session, said that the tenants in the South and West of Ireland, who adopted the Plan of Campaign, were fighting not only their own battle, but also that of the tenants in the North, as the latter were really in as bad circumstances as themselves. I should say that rather proved that agitators did not go to the North, as they knew their efforts there would be unavailing in producing an illegal conspiracy. It has been said in the past how these agrarian outrages are the outcome of a long preconcerted plan of agitation carried out to such a state of perfection that a murder would shake a Ministry, or a blank calendar be the triumph of an Administration. If that was the case some years ago, how much truer is the statement now! Too many outrages in Ireland now are guarded against, lest the consciences of hon. Members above the Gangway should be disturbed. And I assert that the present comparatively peaceful state of Ireland is because the National League have thought it unfit that there should be any general incitement, and consequently the people are at once ready to be law-abiding. No doubt, hon. Gentleman opposite will ascribe this absence of crime to the hopes of the people of the near approach of Home Rule. Logical reasoning would point rather to agitation being temporarily laid aside; for, in those instances where it is resorted to, it is at once followed by illegal actions. Hon. Members opposite have a varied armoury of weapons, and not the least powerful is their tongue, whether in inciting or in cajoling the people to believe in a store of imaginary wealth as they represent Home Rule to be; or, when they are blarneying hon. Members above the Gangway that all their acts are Constitutional. The smooth tongue, though, is being laid aside, and threats substituted as to what shall occur if this Bill passes. Are we to have no progress in bringing Ireland to a better state? It is complained that sufficient evidence of crime is not forthcoming. Are we to wait till anarchy over the whole of Ireland takes place, before we try to govern the country according to the meaning of our laws? The Act of 1882 did good. Over 2,500 crimes in the first half-year of 1882; only 800 in the first half-year of 1883. The whole question is whether there shall be Home Rule or not. And the Opposition do not say that Home Rule is now necessary, but that they will make our government so impossible that it shall be necessary. How far will hon. Members above the Gangway go with the Irish Members? Will they agree to all their demands and actions? There is no liberty without protection, no protection without the help of law. This Bill seeks to give that protection; and, therefore, instead of liberty, it imposes restraint only on the factious and seditious. Hon. Members below the Gangway, at the present moment in this House, speak in a manner which shows their anxiety that the consciences of other hon. Members opposite shall not be shocked; and that they shall not be reminded that those with whom they are now hand-in-hand have been the leaders in all the terrible state of things that have gone on in Ireland. They boasted that theirs was a Constitutional agitation. But, as a matter of fact, its object is, if possible, to make the Government of Great Britain and Ireland powerless and impotent in Ireland.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): The hon. Member who has just sat down has alluded to the moderation of language which hon. Members from Ireland observe in this House, as compared with the licence in which they indulge themselves when addressing, he says, their constituencies. We listened the other night to the remarks of the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore), who spoke with a restrained conviction, which, I think, must have impressed all his hearers, and who addressed us with a moderation of language which, I think, might have served as a model for all of us. It was while remembering that fact that I was surprised to have placed in my hands a copy of a newspaper, called *The Indicator*, of March the 29th, which contains a speech of the hon. Member for Chelsea, from which I will ask the permission of the House to read a single sentence. The hon. Member said—

> "The more he saw of the conduct of Irish Members the more he felt convinced of the absolute folly and wickedness of handing over the government of Ireland to that disloyal, ignorant, and insolent crew."

There can be no doubt, therefore, that there are Members on the other side of the House who speak one way inside the House, and another way out of it; and, therefore, they have no right so freely to take to task hon. Members below the Gangway. There is another point I wish to refer to in the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. I think I am right in saying that the hon. Member for East Renfrew (Mr. Shaw-Stewart), who preceded the hon. Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. Cochrane-Baillie), on that side of the House, as well as the hon. Member for North St. Pancras himself, both hon. Members seem to suffer from the delusion—or what I venture to believe to be a delusion—from which so many other persons suffer at this moment on the Tory Benches, and that is that the discontent of Ireland is the result of agitation. That is the position which was taken up by the hon. Member for North St. Pancras and the hon. Member for East Renfrew—namely, that discontent is the result of agitation in Ireland. On this side of the House we entirely reverse that proposition. We consider that the agitation is the result of discontent. We hear from the other side of the House that if we could only get rid of the National League everything would go on as merrily as a marriage bell. The same thing was said of Henry Grattan, and of Daniel O'Connell—namely, that if you could only get rid of them Ireland would be at peace. The same thing is said now of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), and I verily believe that those who make the assertion honestly entertain the opinion that if the hon. Member could only be kept quiet, or got out of the way, Ireland would be at peace. They have been very slow to learn the lessons of history; and they remind one of that historic class of people who thought that when they had broken the Æolian harp, they might, with justice, write an epitaph on the wind. I have listened with attention to the speeches which have been made in the course of this debate. I have been present during most of them, and I have been in the constant expectation of hearing from someone what the lines are on which this Bill is pressed upon the acceptance of the House. I maintain that the Bill has no claim to exist unless it can be shown by hon. Members opposite that there is some unusual and abnormal state of crime in Ireland which requires an exceptional law to be enforced. I have listened during the whole of the debate to the speeches which have been delivered from the Government Benches; but I confess that I have found nothing in the arguments adduced in respect of the necessity for the Bill which is of an intelligible character. It is very much like a page out of one of the books written by the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, where the knave of hearts was prosecuted for an offence he had, I believe, not committed, and the evidence against him consisted of a letter, which had been picked up, relating to some perfectly trivial matter, which referred in no way to any offence whatever, and which letter was not in the handwriting of the accused, nor had his signature attached to it. I did expect when the hon. and learned Solicitor General for England (Sir Edward Clarke) rose to address the House that we should have heard something intelligible upon this point. I listened attentively to what he said, and I think that the whole case may be summed up in one of the hon. and learned Gentleman's sentences, in which, speaking on behalf of the Government, he characterized statistics as "unintelligible details."

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir Edward Clarke) (Plymouth): The hon. Member is mistaken—I did not speak of statistics in general as being "unintelligible details." What I did say was this—that if you were to take 40 or 50 cases which have occurred in Ireland, and were to enter fully into them, with the view of testing the correctness of the conclusions arrived at by the Judges, you would be engaged in a discussion of unintelligible details.

Mr. JAMES STUART: I am glad that "the unintelligible details" the hon. and learned Gentleman spoke of are so restricted, and I accept his explanation; but I am bound to say, at the same time, that I should like to have heard the details he referred to, and I do not think they would have been quite as unintelligible as he endeavours to make out. So much for that point. Up to the present we have had no authoritative statement whatever as to the real character, nature, and amount of crime, so far as I can judge, on which the existence of this Bill is based. What, then, is the ground which hon. Gentlemen on the other side have really fallen back upon? That on which the Government have introduced the Bill, as far as I can gather from the speech of the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire, is put in a single sentence—namely, "The only alternative left us is that of Her Majesty's Government." That, I presume, is about true; because I cannot see that there is any alternative between giving Ireland the management of its own affairs, which it so ardently desires, and governing it precisely as we desire it to be governed. The hon. Member who spoke last asserted that hon. Members on that side have not violated their pledges. It is hard to say what their pledges may have been; but the hon. Member said that that was not the case, because at the last Election we asserted that their policy must be a policy of coercion. I admit that, so far as I am concerned, I endeavoured to say that during the whole of the Election Campaign, when our opponents, all the time, were engaged in saying that such was not the case. What they said, and led the people to believe, was that coercion was not the Conservative alternative. There is no doubt whatever that a large number of persons, to whom Home Rule was a new idea, and who did not like it much, fell back either upon voting for a Conservative, or not voting for a Liberal, because they really believed what the Conservatives said—namely, that Ireland was to receive henceforth from them equal measures with England and Scotland. That was the promise held out in Pitt's time, and a promise to the same effect has continued until now. It has always been what was just going to be done in Ireland, but it never has been done hitherto. The only case in which equal justice has been meted out to Ireland along with England and Scotland was in the last extension of the franchise; and the result of that extended franchise has been that the Irish people have been more clear and pronounced in their demand for Home Rule, and that the English people have more appreciated and agreed with that demand than they had ever done before. The hon. Member who has just sat down referred to something which was stated by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) about making an attempt to confer equal justice upon Ireland with England and Scotland; and that if they found it impossible to do that, then they must fall back upon coercion. The hon. Member quoted that as a matter to prove that Members on that side of the House certainly had coercion in their mind at the Election as, at any rate, an ultimate, although a partially concealed, policy. The hon. Member ought to have remembered that the statement he quoted was made on the 19th of August, some time after the Election. But the other day, in speaking on the same subject, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington confessed that he had wholly adopted the policy of coercion. Here are the words he used—

> "I say, from what I know of Ireland, and from what I know of the present position, my belief is, that before a month or six weeks shall have passed, if that Bill becomes law, Ireland will be, as far as law and order and the protection of life and property are concerned, quiet and tranquil. I believe that within a couple of months of the passing of that Bill peace and order will reign in that country. Then will be the moment for pushing on boldly with remedial legislation."

I am glad that the noble Lord is ready to push on more boldly than the Marquess of Salisbury, who fixed a limit of 20 years, whereas the noble Lord only gives a month or six weeks. But what I want to come to is the further statement which was made by the noble Lord. He says—

> "You must use the plough and harrow of strong Executive government before you can attempt to sow the seed of remedial legislation."

I think that was a most unfortunate phrase, and with respect to that I will ask how does it agree with the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who strongly supports coercion, because it is to be carried on along with remedial measures? The noble Lord now tells us that not only is coercion to precede remedial measures, but that it must, in the nature of things, precede them, just as the harrowing and ploughing of a field must precede the sowing of the seed. There was to be a sequence, but not simultaneity; and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, in dealing with our attitude towards the Coercion Bill, said that it would be an unworthy quibble to assert that the Government are not prepared to introduce remedial measures. Does the right hon. Gentleman really think that the introduction of remedial measures is tantamount to the carrying of them, and especially when he has regard to the place in which they are introduced? A remedial measure has been introduced in the House of Lords on the subject of the Irish land. Everyone is familiar with the fact that a multitude of measures for remedial legislation have been introduced in the House in which we sit. The measures introduced between 1830 and 1870 alone were multitudinous, to say nothing of the number since introduced by hon. Members below the Gangway; but out of the whole of them only two succeeded in passing this House, in addition to the great measures of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), and both of them—namely, the Tenants' Improvement Compensation Bill of 1852, and the Compensation for Disturbances Bill of 1880, were rejected by the House of Lords. There has never yet been any measure whatever passed by the House of Lords for the relief of the Irish tenants. The only Bills they have passed have been Bills for the relief of the landlords; and I cannot help expressing wonder and astonishment that, after such an experience as we have had, and after expressing views such as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham has expressed, he can have such an amount of confidence in the land-reforming tendencies of the House of Lords. I should like to refer the House and the right hon. Gentleman to the words of John Milton in a similar case. He says, in the preface to his great prose work—I change a word in the quotation —namely, the question to which it applies:

> "Indeed, my Lords, are ye at last become the gracious guardians of these principles which in your hearts you despise? Or has the spirit

> at length becomed in light upon your souls where light never shone before? For shame, my Lords, will ye never forsake inconsistence? Demons have trembled and Jews have been converted; but when the cause of land reform is echoed from the House of Lords perfidy is at hand, and we ought to look about us."

So much for the argument by which this Coercion Bill is supported—namely, that it is accompanied by remedial legislation. The hon. Gentleman who last spoke made a statement to which I feel bound to refer. He spoke of the machinery of the law, and he said that the essence of the present Bill is, that it only changes the machinery by which the law is to be worked. Now, I entirely dissent from that proposition; and, on the contrary, I believe that there is a great alteration in respect, not only of the machinery by which the Bill is to be worked, but also a considerable change in the essence of the law itself. The Bill has been summarized by more than one hon. Gentleman in this House; but that is not my notion of a summary of its details in any sense whatever. The stroke of the Bill is to fall upon any person who, by words or acts, shall incite, solicit, or persuade any person to commit any of the offences hereinbefore mentioned; and one of those offences is taking part in any riot or unlawful assembly. I am far from thinking that that is a law which is worded in exactly the same way both for England and Ireland; and, therefore, I think that, in that respect the essence of the law is in some respects changed. I noticed the other morning in a Tory newspaper a strong diatribe against the meeting which took place yesterday in Hyde Park, in which the writer used these words—

> "It can only be by some unfortunate technicality that these proceedings can escape being called treasonable."

Now, such an "unfortunate technicality" is removed by such provisions as those I have referred to, which are contained in this Bill? I can only rejoice that in this country this "unfortunate technicality," as it is called, should still exist. I do say, however, that if this Bill becomes an Act, and is to be enforced by persons who take the same view as the writer in this newspaper of what is a treasonable assembly, there would, I think, be very little chance of popular government in this country; and the House must also remember that which has been abundantly established—namely, that the Gentlemen in whose hands the carrying out of the government of Ireland is placed are persons who assume towards the political aspirations, the demonstrations, and the political action of the Irish people generally, precisely the same view as the editor of that newspaper takes respecting the action of the common people of this country. There is another clause which, if it does not enact, at least re-introduces in an operative form a great difference between the law in Ireland and that which exists in England and Scotland. I refer to offences under the Whiteboy Acts. Now, a reprint of the Whiteboy Acts has been promised to the House; but we have not yet had them laid on the Table, and they are not accessible generally to newspaper editors and the common people of the country. Therefore, it has not yet transpired what is involved in that clause. The Whiteboy Acts are about the most far reaching, and the most terrible Acts that were ever passed in a Christian country. Let me give one or two quotations from them. The first of these Whiteboy Acts was passed in 1775-6, and it contained this clause—

> "And whereas, notwithstanding the laws now being for the better securing the Government by disarming Papists, there is good reason to suspect that several persons contrary to the true intent and meaning of the said laws have arms and ammunition in their custody and power by means of which many of the mischiefs hereinbefore mentioned have happened, be it enacted that it shall be lawful for any one or more Justices" to do so and so.

This was an Act of the then Irish Parliament which was necessarily subservient to the Government of the day. I want to know definitely whether the offence referred to in this clause of the Whiteboy Acts is continued in the present Bill? [Mr. Holmes: Not at all.] I am glad to hear it. Clause 2 of that Act is as follows:—

> "If any person or persons being armed with fire-arms, firelock, pistol, or any offensive weapon or weapons whatsoever, or having his, her or their face or faces, body or bodies disguised in any manner whatsoever, or wearing any particular badge, dress, or uniform not usually worn by him, her, or them upon his, her, or their lawful occasions, or assuming any particular name or denomination not usually assumed by His Majesty's subjects upon their lawful occasions, shall rise, assemble or appear by day or by night to the terror of His Majesty's subjects every person so offending," &c.

I wish to ask whether that clause is to

be enforced? [Mr. HOLMES: Yes, Sir.] Then I wish to know if it is to be applicable to the Salvation Army? How are we to discriminate between the Salvation Army and other bodies? I would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman if he cannot insert words into the clause to exempt in some sort of way the Salvation Army from the operation of the measure, in the same way as the Trades Unions have been exempted? I now come to the next Whiteboy Act, which was passed in 1787. Clause 1 says—

> "If any persons to the number of 12 or more being unlawfully, riotously, and tumultuously assembled, to the disturbance of the public peace, and being required or commanded in the King's name by one or more Justice or Justices of the Peace . . . . where any such rising or assembly shall be by proclamation made in the King's name in the form hereinafter directed to disperse themselves and retire to their habitations shall to the number of 12 or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made as aforesaid unlawfully, riotously, and tumultuously remain or continue together as aforesaid for the space of one hour after such proclamation made as aforesaid, then such continuing together as aforesaid to the number of 12 or more after such proclamation shall be adjudged felony without benefit of clergy, and the offenders therein being by due course of law thereof convicted shall be adjudged felons and shall suffer death, as in cases of felony without benefit of clergy . . . ."

Then I come to Clause 11 of the same Act—

> "And be it enacted that if any person shall print, write, post, publish, or knowingly circulate or deliver, or shall cause or procure to be printed, written, posted, published, circulated or delivered any notice, letter or message inciting or tending to incite to any riot, tumultuous meeting, or unlawful combination or confederacy, any such person being by due course of law thereof convicted shall be adjudged a felon and shall suffer death."

May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman who is to be the Judge as to whether the assembly is a tumultuous one or not?

MR. HOLMES: I have already answered that Question. The hon. Member surely knows that is to be decided by the summary jurisdiction of the magistrates—by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction.

MR. JAMES STUART: That means then that the decision is to rest with the two Resident Magistrates. Therefore I come back to the point that we are giving the power of dealing with tumultuous meetings, so far as the Irish people are concerned, to the judgment of two persons, who are, from the nature of their surroundings, in identically the same position as the editor of the London newspaper, from whose article I read an extract a short time ago. My point is that, so far as tumultuous meetings are concerned, the judgment is not left to the Judge or jury, but to the Resident Magistrates appointed by the Crown; and the Crown, therefore, will hold firmly the reins of every public meeting that may be held in Ireland. As to the point that these Acts were passed by the Irish Government, I am quite prepared to admit that that was so, and that one of them was passed by Grattan's Parliament; but on the 15th of October, 1831, an Act was passed to amend those Acts. The Act of 1831 was, on the whole, a merciful Act, inasmuch as it repealed the death penalties and substituted transportation for life, and for seven years; but, in doing so, the Act extended the number and multitude of the crimes, and introduced one remarkable and altogether new crime. I, therefore, propose to read to the House Clause 3 of the Act of 1831. I ask the pardon of the House for doing so, but it must be remembered that we have not yet had placed before us, even on the Table of the House, the details of the Whiteboy Acts. Clause 3 is as follows:—

> "And be it enacted that if any person or persons shall knowingly print, write, post, publish, circulate, send or deliver, or cause or procure to be printed, posted, circulated, sent or delivered any notice or letter or message exciting, or tending to excite any riot, tumultuous or unlawful meeting, or assembly, or unlawful combination or confederacy, or threatening any violence, injury, or damage upon any condition or in any event or otherwise to the person or property real or personal of any person whatever, or demanding any money, arms, weapons or weapon, ammunition, or other matter or thing whatsoever, or directing or requiring any person to do or not to do any act, or to quit the service or employment of any person, or to set or to give out any land, every person so offending shall be liable to be transported beyond seas for the term of seven years. . . ."

The House will see that the words of this clause are not demanding money for any particular specified civil purpose, but demanding any money, arms, weapons or weapon, ammunition, or any matter or thing whatsoever, or directing or requiring to do or not to do any act. That, Sir, is a most sweeping clause.

I would ask the House to look at the provisions I have read, and especially this one which relates to demanding money, without assigning any purpose for the demand, or directing or requiring any person to do or not to do any particular act. Any person so offending is liable by the Act of 1831, on conviction by a jury, to the punishment of seven years' transportation. The Act of 1831, therefore, while diminishing the death penalty, materially extended the number and character of the offences. This Act still exists in Ireland. Much attention has not been paid to it, simply because it is impossible to enforce it, and rightly so, because these Acts are contrary to all the ideas which now exist in regard to the Criminal Law since the reforms initiated by Sir Samuel Romilly and others. It is quite obvious, I think, why the Government got rid of the death penalty, and, while reducing the punishment, enlarged the number of offences. I have read to the House some of the provisions of the Whiteboy Acts, and I will now read what Grattan said about the Acts themselves. The same thing may certainly be said of the Bill now before the House. Grattan spoke as follows:—

> "Such Acts of tyranny are the weakness of the times, the tyranny of one side and the feebleness of the other. . . . Do not, then, tolerate a power which has no foundation in utility or in necessity, or in the laws of England; or the laws of Ireland; or the laws of nature; or the laws of God."

I cannot help thinking that these words are applicable to the provisions of the present Bill. There is only one other provision in the Bill to which I desire to refer, and that is the Trades Union Clause. It has been said that this provision of the Bill is not directed to offences similar to those which have been attributed to trades unions. If that is so, why put in a clause excluding trades unions? Was it because Her Majesty's Government felt that but for this clause, their Bill would strike at trades unions? If so, then I would infer that the offence of tenants in Ireland at which the Bill strikes is of a similar character to the Trades Union Clause—the power of combination clause, and it strikes at every act in social life, and more especially at combination of tenants. This is, in fact, a landlords' Bill for enforcing rents, and it is aimed at the National League—that National League which has been the saviour of tenants, and which has roused the ire of the Party opposite. We have heard a great deal from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham about secret societies, but the National League is not a secret society. It stands between tenants and bad landlords. It also stands between the English taxpayer and bad bargains. That is clear from the evidence before the late Commission of Captain Hamilton, a member of the Property Defence Association. He says—

> "It is clearly the object of the National League to interfere with the working of the Land Purchase Act (1885), by forcing the landlords to make reductions in the judicial rents; to prevent the tenants who would otherwise avail themselves of the provisions of the Act from doing so, under the impression that in a short time they will be able to purchase at far better terms than at present. My experience, both as an honorary director of this Association and as a land agent, leads me to believe that if the payment of judicial rents were vigorously enforced, the Land Act (1881) and Land Purchase Act (1885), if extended in its operations, would settle the Land Question in Ireland in a very short time."

Of course it would settle the Land Question so far as the landlords are concerned, but not so far as the English taxpayer is concerned, for he would take over a bargain the tenant could not fulfil. The National League is protecting the English taxpayer against such a state of things. I should like to commend that point to the English public. The Bill also proposes the abolition of trial by jury. In a certain number—and they are a very large number indeed — in a certain number of offences trial by jury is practically abolished, and abolished for ever. Of course, we know that nothing can be for ever in this world; but, as far as we can make out, the Bill is to be as permanent as anything can be. The right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland said, as a sort of apology for the Bill, that there is a tendency to increase the number of offences even in this country to which summary jurisdiction should be applied, and that these may be put in the same category. Now, I deny that they are in the same category at all. The Irish offences are largely political offences; at any rate, they are committed for a political object. Nobody denies that; and this is an endeavour to deal with political offences by summary jurisdiction. There can be no doubt that the alleged offence of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) was a political offence. The offence for which the hon. Member was tried was obviously, and understood to be—as far as it was an offence at all, for it was not proved to be one—for a political object. Therefore, I cannot see the *sequitur* in the reasoning of hon. Members opposite. I would ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland to turn back to the commencement of the extension of summary jurisdiction. It took place largely in connection with the Excise Laws, and one of the great debates which took place in 1736 occurred upon the Smuggling Bill—and I would ask hon. Members to read the speeches which were delivered on that occasion by Lord Hardwicke and the Lord Chancellor Talbot. They explained that the letting in of summary jurisdiction for such offences would induce Parliament to extend it to political offences, and now the realization of their fears has come. Hon. Gentlemen opposite have taken solemn pledges that they will treat England and Ireland alike. We see then what we have to fear in England. Allow me to read a few words from *Blackstone*. They are not very long, but they show what he thought of the transcendent privileges enjoyed by the subjects of this Realm in possessing the right of trial by jury. Speaking in a passage which will be familiar to some hon. Gentlemen opposite of jury trial, *Blackstone* calls it—

> "A Constitution which I may venture to affirm has, under Providence, secured the just liberties of this nation for a long succession of years."

He goes on to say—

> "It preserves in the hands of the people that share which they ought to have in the administration of public justice, and prevents the encroachments of the more powerful and wealthy citizens."

Is it for the purpose of preventing these encroachments that Her Majesty's Government propose to abolish jury trial in Ireland? In another familiar quotation from *Blackstone* there are these words—

> "It is, therefore, above all, a duty which every man owes to his country, his friends, his posterity, and himself . . . . to guard with the most jealous circumspection against the introduction of new and arbitrary methods of trial which under a variety of plausible pretences may in time imperceptibly undermine this best preservative of English liberty."

Now, nobody ever attempted to undermine liberty for the sake of undermining it. Everybody who has endeavoured to sweep away a great popular protection has done it for some purpose which he believed to be a good one; to accomplish some end, may be, in the interest of some class with which he was connected. It may be said that *Blackstone* refers to the preservation of English liberty, and that Ireland is in an entirely different position; and I wish the House to bear in mind that it is not possible to hold on by, and to continue to enjoy, the blessings of liberty and legitimate government at home, while in Ireland and elsewhere we are guilty of acts of violence and fraud. *Blackstone* continues—

> "Every new tribunal created for the decision of facts without the intervention of a jury is a step towards establishing aristocracy, the most oppressive of absolute governments."

Mr. Justice Warren says—

> "It is a matter of supreme concern to the country to be beware of shaking the confidence of the humble classes of society in the administration of criminal justice, by infringing their right to an open and formal trial by their equals and placing them at the mercy of, it may be, an interested and prejudiced superior."

Could any words be more directly applicable to the proposal now before us? What the Government propose that the House of Commons should do is to abolish trial by jury for a large number of offences, and especially offences of a political character or tinge. I do not deny the right of Parliament to do what it likes, and to pass this Bill; but I do deny the moral right of Parliament to pass this Bill. Let me refer the House to a passage which sums up the whole position in regard to this matter. It is contained in the following words of Lord Chatham:—

> "No Court of Justice can have a power inconsistent with or paramount to the known law of the land"—

thereby he means the provisions of Magna Charta—

> "and the people"—

to these words I would direct particular attention—

> "when they choose, their representatives never mean to convey to them a power of invading the rights or trampling upon the liberties of those whom they represent."

This Parliament was elected without any question having been raised of the abrogation of trial by jury, and it commences its legislation by trampling on the liberties of those whom it represents. That this Parliament does represent Ireland is one of the things which hon. Members on the other side of the House are strong in insisting upon.

The Government have brought in a political Bill. They say—"Abolish trial by jury, because juries will not convict for certain offences." These offences are political or of a political tinge. An eminent French writer—De Tocqueville—whose opinion is worth having on such a matter—says of trial by jury—

> "To look upon the jury as a mere judicial institution"—

recollect this is written by a Frenchman who was well acquainted with the criminal jurisdiction of the United States and of this country—

> "is to confine our attention to a very narrow view of it, for however great its influence may be upon the decisions of the Law Courts, that influence is very subordinate to the powerful effects which it produces on the destinies of the community at large. The jury is, above all, a political institution, and it must be regarded in this light to be fully appreciated. The institution of the jury may be aristocratic or democratic, according to the class of society from which the jurors are selected; but it always preserves its republican character, inasmuch as it places the real direction of society in the hands of the governed. . . . . The true sanction of political laws is to be found in penal legislation, and if that sanction be wanting the law will sooner or later lose its cogency. He who punishes infractions of the law is the real master of society. Now, the institution of the jury invests the people with the direction of society."

Let me say that the non-agreement of juries is the ultimate political weapon of the people; it has been a political weapon in England, as in the case of Horne Tooke and the Blasphemy Laws. And it may be so again. We have the spirit of repression abroad among us, as is shown by the remark in the newspaper article which I have already quoted—namely, that the demonstration of the preceding day only, by an unfortunate technicality, escaped being dealt with as treasonable. It is a miserable state of things that a country should have to defend itself by means of its juries; but it is a solemn warning from the nation—not from its Representatives or its delegates, but from the whole mass of the whole nation—that its laws must be changed, and that they are on a false basis, unjust and wrong. To this solemn warning the Government reply in Ireland by coercion, which has often failed, and by a policy of savage repression which the English people will, I believe, recoil from adopting.

Mr. KNOWLES (Salford, W.) said, the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Munro-Fergusson) had charged Conservative Members with delighting to figure in the Division List, rather than in debate—in other words, with a conspiracy of silence. Their answer to that taunt was, that they intended, if they could, to prevent the work of the Parliamentary machine this Session being barren. There were many hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial Benches who had not taken part in any debate, either during last Session or during the present Session. What they had felt was, that if they were silent, they would not impede Her Majesty's Government; and that, if they had not observed silence, they would have added fuel to the fire of Obstruction which, in their opinion, had raged incessantly within the four walls of the House. But now, however, that the policy of Her Majesty's Government had been put forward, they felt that it was their duty to say some words in support of that policy as it affected Ireland. That policy dealt with social order and with the Land Question, with remedial legislation, and by these means they hoped to remove that discontent to which the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart) had referred. The Bill had been described as an insult to Ireland, and a policy of provocation to outrage. He (Mr. Knowles) did not agree with that statement. From that point of view, the Ten Commandments were quite as much an insult to Ireland and a provocation to outrage. It had been stated in the debate that, since the Union, there had been 86 Coercion Acts, and that the present one, if it became law, would make the 87th. He did not know on what authority that statement was made; but it had at once been adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) without confirmation, simply for the sake of political alliteration, to induce political memory, and also for the sake of giving it prominence as a political cry. On the contrary, he (Mr. Knowles) believed—and he had authority for the statement—that only some 46 or 47 Coercion Acts had been passed since the Union, and within this century; while from 1782 up to 1800 (the year of the Union) more than 50 Coercion Acts were passed by an Irish Parliament, in the Irish capital, and directed against the Irish people. They were passed to suppress murder, outrage, unlawful assemblies, conspiracies, and riots; to restrict the importation of arms, to prevent the entry of aliens, and for similar objects. When a complaint was raised, therefore, that the policy of Her Majesty's Government was an everlasting one of coercion, he would remind the House that one of the last measures passed by an Irish Parliament made three Coercion Acts permanent, and extended five others for seven years. As to the Coercion Acts passed since the Union, he submitted that most of them were directed against the Whiteboys, the Ribbonmen, and the Fenians, while many of them were merely Continuance Acts, and were passed with the assent of the Irish Members, and most of them were passed by Liberal Governments. All these Acts had been successful, having put down the crimes and extinguished the societies against which they were directed, though possibly these crimes and societies had revived in new forms and under new names. He challenged the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, or the hon. Member for Shoreditch, or anyone else, to point out a single one of these Acts, passed since the Union, as one which ought not to have been passed; and he would remind the House that probably the most stringent of these measures was that of 1882 (the Prevention of Crime Act, 1882) passed by the irony of fate under the auspices of a Liberal Government, of which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian himself was the head. That Act, which had been described by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) as "mild as milk," provided for the trial of prisoners charged with treason, murder, manslaughter, arson, and the like, by a Special Commission of three Judges; it also provided for a change of venue in criminal cases, which was worthy of notice, and it contained stringent provisions making membership of any unlawful society, intimidation, and rioting, punishable with six months' imprisonment. It authorized the Lord Lieutenant to prohibit meetings. It authorized the arrest of persons found at night under suspicious circumstances, and of suspected strangers. It authorized the examination of witnesses, although no particular person was in custody charged with an offence; it provided also for the confiscation of seditious newspapers, and for a search for arms and illegal documents by night as well as by day. It increased the number of police in disturbed districts, and charged upon each district the cost of its extra police, and the compensation paid to the relations of persons murdered, and to persons injured within it, and so on. If it was said that that Act ought not to have been passed, at least it was a fact that, after it came into operation, agrarian outrages fell from 4,439 in 1881, and 3,433 in 1882, to 870 in 1883, and 762 in 1884. It was unnecessary for him to remind the House of the condition of Ireland during the last five years of the late Liberal Government, of the 10,000 agrarian outrages which were committed, when the cost of governing the country was increased by £80,000 a-year, when it was brought to the verge of civil war, and when the right hon. Gentleman put in prison nearly 1,000 persons at once merely upon suspicion. The right hon. Gentleman relied on their forgetfulness. He had said himself—

> "No memory is so short as a political memory. A Party that can count on forgetfulness need not trouble itself with repentance or conversion."

Those words he had not spoken in the excitement of the Hyde Park gathering yesterday, nor in the heat of Parliamentary debate, nor in the whirl of a railway journey, nor in the warmth of post-prandial conviviality. Those words were deliberately thought out, and as deliberately were they penned, and they were penned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian himself. Those words were the key-note of the right hon. Gentleman, and of his policy. He appealed to their forgetfulness; but Her Majesty's Government appealed to their memories. With regard to the provision in the Bill as to the change of venue, that was not new. In the time of Henry VIII. an Act was passed, by which persons charged with murder, whether the crime was committed abroad or in England, might be tried in any shire or place in the Kingdom; and that Act was extended in the time of George III. to the trial of accessories before the fact, and to cases of manslaughter. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) had also alluded to the law by which a change of venue might be made in Scotland from any part of that country to Edinburgh; but he (Mr. Knowles) wished to draw attention to a precedent in the case of the Canadian political prisoners. In 1838 Lord Durham went out to Canada at the time of the Rebellion, and granted a general amnesty, excepting certain persons to the number of 24. He ordered some of these to be banished to Bermuda, and those abroad were to stay there. Unfortunately, he exceeded his powers. The prisoners were sent to Quebec, thence to Liverpool, and thence to London. The change of venue was legal; but his Ordinance banishing the prisoners to the Bermudas was illegal, and that view was subsequently taken by Lord Abinger, before whom the case was argued, and on the 16th of May, 1839, judgment was given to that effect; and although the prisoners had pleaded guilty to the crime of high treason in Upper Canada, the Ordinance of Lord Durham was quashed; and Monsieur Garneau, in his *Histoire du Canada*, Vol. iii., p. 340, says—

> "The Ministry were in great embarrassment. Nevertheless, the Ordinance was illegal, and the Sovereign was advised to disavow it."

Not only was there a change of venue from one country to another, but the prisoners received justice. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) himself had no objection to this clause, which provided for change of venue, for, on the 6th instant, at Birmingham, he said so, and gave as his reason that if the Bill passed in its present form he should have no objection to being tried in England—indeed, that he would prefer being tried at the Old Bailey to being tried by a packed jury in Dublin. The charge of jury-packing in Dublin was baseless; but, after this declaration on the part of the hon. Member for East Mayo, he hoped that the Government would stick to their guns and insist on the clause providing for the change of venue. He did not believe there was any more jury-packing in Ireland than in England, although the Irish talked about it. The law in both countries was, in effect, the same on the subject; in both countries the aim was to get a fair trial for the prisoner. To go to another subject—crime in connection with evictions. It had been said that crime followed evictions. To that he took exception; because, if that were the case, one would expect to find more crime in London than in all Ireland. With respect to malicious offences against property in England, Scotland, and Ireland, such as the setting fire to houses, killing and maiming cattle, sending threatening letters, and the like, the latest statistics which he could obtain for the three countries were for the year 1885. In Scotland, in 1885, there were 63 of these offences, with a population of 4,000,000; England and Wales, with a population of 26,000,000, 628; in Ireland, with a population of 5,000,000, 755. When he compared the evictions in London with those in Ireland, he had in his mind the Statute 1 & 2 *Vict.* c. 74—

> "An Act to facilitate the recovery of the possession of tenements after the determination of the tenancy,"

which did not apply to Scotland or Ireland. The landlord could recover possession of house or land after a 21-days' notice. At the end of three weeks the police—not the Sheriff, as in Ireland—could enter, using force, if necessary, and remove the tenant and his effects, and this was the case where the term did not exceed seven years or the rent £20. All that he had to do after the legal notice to quit had expired was to apply to a magistrate for an ejectment warrant. In the Quarter ending 31st December, 1886, in Ireland there were 666 families evicted; 21 of those families, including 90 persons, were re-admitted as tenants; and 396 families, including 3,973 persons, were re-admitted as caretakers. In that quarter, therefore, 249 families were thrust bag and baggage out-of-doors in Ireland. In the Metropolitan Police district, from a Return he had obtained privately from headquarters, he found that in the quarter ending 31st December, 1886, the number of ejectment orders, or judgments under the Acts 1 & 2 *Vict.* c. 74, were 349, and in 26 cases force had to be used, and in only one case had that force been resisted. In one case the tenant had been re-admitted as tenant. So that, in round numbers, it might be taken that in the same quarter, as against 250 turned out bag and baggage in Ireland, there were 350 in London. Therefore, that did not bear out the assertion that crime followed evictions. In England there was no re-admission as caretaker, and no six months' notice as in Ireland, and yet we did not hear the same amount of murmuring and grumbling against tyrannical coercion or summary jurisdiction with respect to evictions in England as we did in Ireland. There must be some other cause than evictions for the crime in Ireland, and that cause was not far to seek. He thought the cause was the National League. They had it upon the authority of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian that crime dogged their steps, and there had not been heard, since he uttered those words, any statement to the contrary. They had had lately a No Rent Manifesto from Irish Archbishops. The hon. Member for Shoreditch said the National League stood between the tenants and bad bargains. He (Mr. Knowles), on the contrary, said it stood between the landlords and their just rents—rents fixed judicially by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. He had in his hand a quotation from Archbishop Croke, in which he said in effect that a Government which spent Government money in collecting rack-rents was worse than the landlord who imposed rack-rents. If it was right, therefore, to starve landlords, *à fortiori* it was right to starve out a Government which upheld landlords. Who, then, would pay the taxes for the Irish people? That did not bear out the statement of the hon. Member for Shoreditch that the National League protected the British taxpayer. The National League compelled people to join its ranks and to subscribe to its funds. It fixed the amount of rents; it interfered with the tenants who were willing and able to pay their rents, between brother and brother, and between father and son. He had extracts from Nationalist papers, issued within the last month or two, to prove those statements. The English people were a passive people. They had stood by and seen the National League and the crime which dogged its steps a long time. They had seen a No Rent Manifesto; but when the League touched the pocket of the British taxpayers they would cry out. It was also said that the Bill was aimed, not at putting down crime, but at putting down the National League. Well, if the Bill did no other good than crush the National League, he considered it would have done some good, because the National League was at the bottom of the trouble and disturbance which was in Ireland. Another complaint which had been made against the Bill was, that it did not extend to England, Scotland, and Wales. For his part, he should be quite willing to have it so extended. The people of England lived under the Ten Commandments, and he believed that true liberty would be restored to the people of Ireland by this Bill. Ireland was a beautiful country—a country of green valleys and rushing streams—a country which ought rather to be the subject of the poet's theme than the scene of civil strife. Her people were warm-hearted, generous, impulsive, and truly loyal. From their impulsive nature they were easily led; but they were as easily led for good as for evil. It was not political change that Ireland wanted, but social amalgamation. If the Government dealt with them justly, firmly, and consistently, as he believed they would, that was the Government which he would support.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.) said, he accepted the invitation of the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) to discuss the details of the Bill. It differed in one respect from every other coercive proposal that had ever been made or passed. That was the first time that repressive legislation had been proposed, not as an extreme expedient to enable the Government to cope with a special emergency, but as a permanent surrender of all their Constitutional rights, and as a disability under which 5,000,000 of the inhabitants of one portion of the so-called United Kingdom were expected to live at all times in loyalty and contentment. It was not very difficult to see the reason why the Government proposed to make this a permanent Act. It was true that, since the passing of the ill-starred Act of Union, Irishmen had at no time enjoyed equal rights with Englishmen. Yet, hitherto, every Coercion Act had been introduced to meet a supposed emergency. The fundamental principle of all repressive legislation in the past had been that it could only be justified on the ground of emergency; but now, however, that had been discarded, and the miserable habit of periodical relapse into exceptional legislation—to use the expression of Lord Carnarvon—was no longer to be regarded as an evil. They had to do that, for the very simple reason that they had conclusively shown by their own speeches that no such emergency existed; and so, with magnificent audacity, they had actually informed the House of Commons that they did not propose that Bill on account of the amount of crime in Ireland, but as a valuable permanent amendment of the ordinary law. The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), while making some altogether inconclusive references to the amount of crime in Ireland, did not attempt to justify his measure by the published statistics of agrarian offences. The right hon. Gentleman had very good reason for not attempting such a justification, for the country was as tranquil as it had been in any period during the last 50 years, and was as free from crime and intimidation as it was in 1885, when the Party to whom he belonged abandoned the Crimes Act. Of ordinary crime Ireland was freer to-day in proportion to her population than was either England or Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman had made much of the fact, and they were asked to believe, because some 800 persons were Boycotted wholly or partially, that, therefore, this Act was necessary. They had not been given figures for past years; but in September, 1885, when Lord Salisbury abandoned the Crimes Act, when he declared that the country was sufficiently tranquil to justify a return to the ordinary law, there were 885 persons Boycotted; and in the last month of the same year 891 persons were in the same difficulty. Boycotting, therefore, was at this moment less prevalent than it was when the Tory Party declared in 1885 that coercive legislation was no longer possible. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, not being able to rely on statistics, had fallen back on individual cases, some of which were so vaguely given that it was impossible to trace them; but he (Mr. Redmond) begged the House to remember that the only cases which the right hon. Gentleman had specifically given had been proved by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) to be inaccurate and misleading. In support of his case the Chief Secretary had quoted the charges of four Judges at recent Assizes; but he had deliberately suppressed a score of charges made by Judges in other parts of the country, which showed that over the greater part of Ireland absolute tranquillity reigned. If the Bill before the House were passed as it stood, all personal freedom, all right to free speech, all right of public meeting, all freedom of the Press, would be absolutely at an end in Ireland, and the law would be administered for the future by the officials of the Executive Government. These officials would be empowered to try, without juries, all cases of so-called conspiracy, and the Law of Conspiracy was so wide-reaching and elastic that it might be held to apply to almost all innocent actions of ordinary life. Those who were eager to abolish trial by jury in Ireland ought to weigh the words of Erskine, who affirmed, in one of his speeches on the rights of juries, that if the administration of criminal justice should ever be left in the hands of the Crown and its servants, no more freedom would be enjoyed than the Executive Government of the day might choose to sanction and approve. They were told that the Bill was not directed against agitation; but what right of agitation or of public meeting would exist, save such as met with the sanction or approval of the Executive Government? It was no answer to say that trial by jury had failed in Ireland; because patriotic juries in England had time after time refused to convict in days gone by, and some of the most cherished liberties of the English people were won by the patriotic action of English juries in refusing to find verdicts of guilty. *Blackstone* had been quoted in that debate, but he would remind the House that *Blackstone* had said—

> "The liberties of England cannot but subsist so long as this palladium (trial by jury) remains

> sacred from any inviolation—not only from open attacks, but also from machinations which may undermine it by introducing new and arbitrary methods of trial by Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of the Revenue, and other tribunals similarly constituted, however convenient these may appear at first, as doubtless all arbitrary powers well executed are most convenient. But let it be again remembered that delays and inconveniences in the forms of justice are the price all free nations pay for their liberty in more substantial matters."

Under the Bill trial by jury was abolished in Ireland, and what was substituted for it? Under the Crimes Act of 1882 a Commission of Judges was substituted for trial by jury; but that provision was never acted upon. The Irish Judges met, and unanimously declared that that provision would throw upon their shoulders a burden greater than they could bear; that it would tend to undermine the position of the Irish Justiciary, and that it would be an open and a gross violation of the Constitution. Now, the Judges in Ireland, no matter what their past careers had been, were like the Judges in England, independent of the Executive. The independence of the English Judges was won by the Act of Settlement; but the independence of Judges in Ireland was only obtained under the great International Act of Settlement of 1782. The Irish Judges were, therefore, beyond the power of the Government. They could only be removed by Addresses from both Houses of Parliament, and they could afford to be independent and impartial. Then, if the proposal to invest these men with powers such as the Crimes Bill contained was an open and gross violation of the Constitution, what, he would ask, would be an adequate description of the provision in the Bill now before the House, which invested these powers, not in independent Judges, but in Resident Magistrates, who were the mere tools of the Executive Government, who could be removed by the scratch of a pen, and who only held their appointments so long as they gave satisfaction to their masters in Dublin Castle? The provision would be nothing short of placing all personal liberty and freedom of speech in Ireland at the mercy of the Executive Government of the day. But it was not alone cases of conspiracy that would come under the jurisdiction of these Resident Magistrates. They were to administer the Whiteboy Acts, those relics of barbarism, which were a disgrace to the Statute Book on which they were inscribed. The 1 & 2 *Will.* IV. enacted that—

> "If any person shall knowingly print, write, publish, circulate, send, deliver, or cause or procure to be printed, written, posted, published, circulated, sent, or delivered, any notice, letter, or message, exciting, or tending to excite, breaches of the peace, they shall be liable to be transported beyond the seas."

Perhaps, they should be thankful for the small mercy that, under the Coercion Act, the Resident Magistrates had power to sentence to six months' imprisonment only, instead of transporting beyond the seas. He called attention to this section of the Whiteboy Act for the reason that, a few months ago, a newspaper proprietor in Ireland was prosecuted under it, because a resolution adopted at a public meeting in his neighbourhood was published in the news columns of his paper. His newspaper was a bitter and troublesome enemy of the landlord faction in his neighbourhood; and, for that reason, it was thought advisable to strike a blow at him. But the blow did not reach him, for the jury refused—and he (Mr. Redmond) said deliberately rightly refused—to convict. If that section was held to apply to newspapers, then every newspaper in Ireland would be absolutely at the mercy of the Government of the day. It might be said that the Press in Ireland was licentious, and should be curbed. They answered that the way to bring about a moderate and reasonable Press was not to destroy the liberty of the Press. He would also reply to that argument in the words of a distinguished Irishman, a descendant of whom he regretted to see on the Front Bench opposite, William Cunningham Plunket, who, speaking of a Coercion Bill of his day, said—

> "The licentiousness of the Press has been complained of. I will tell the Government a better remedy against it than this Bill affords them. Let them act in such a manner as to be above its obloquy. Let them restore the Constitution; let them reform the abuses which pollute every Department; let them mitigate their system of coercion; let them conciliate the people. Then they may laugh at the slanders of a licentious Press; they will have a better defence against its malice than this unconstitutional measure can afford them."

If the Bill would do harm to law-abiding persons, why was it not made applicable to the whole of the United Kingdom? The provisions of the Coercion Bill were to be perpetual. It would be extremely interesting if the House could learn at what particular period the Conservative Leaders and their supporters on the Opposition side of the House arrived at the conclusion that permanent coercion was desirable. They happened to know the opinions of some of the Conservative Leaders in the summer of 1885 when they were hoping to climb into Office with the aid of the Irish votes. Lord Carnarvon was particularly emphatic in July, 1885, in quoting the well-known dictum of Cavour, which said that to conduct government permanently on the principles of a state of siege was utterly impossible, and, therefore, that it was equally impossible to govern Ireland by coercion if it was to be indefinitely re-enacted. It would also be interesting to know now whether Lord Carnarvon was in favour of the perpetual clause of the Coercion Bill. About the same time the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) said—

> "Parliament has granted to Ireland complete political freedom in Parliamentary elections by the Ballot and the extension of the franchise, and it is absolutely inconsistent with that political freedom to continue permanently the old-fashioned government of Ireland by a system of coercion."

The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had announced that he was in favour of the Bill and the whole of it. He (Mr. Redmond) hoped the noble Lord would speak in that debate. But the noble Lord, in the summer of 1885, expressed his belief in the Constitutional doctrine that special legislation ought not to be resorted to except in times of great emergency, and that no such emergency existed in 1885. In October of last year the noble Lord said that no emergency had arisen. But he (Mr. Redmond) would ask how could it be said that a great emergency had now arisen, in view of the fact that crime and intimidation were admittedly less now than they had been in the summer of 1885, and not greater than they had been in October of last year? But it was not the inconsistency of right hon. Gentlemen opposite that was most marked. In going back to a policy of coercion they were only going back to their traditional policy; but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, and those who voted with him in supporting a Bill of that character, were turning their backs upon the most cherished principles of their political creed. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham supported the Bill he would be deliberately sacrificing the liberty of 5,000,000 of the inhabitants of one portion of the United Kingdom in order to assist in keeping a Tory Government in power. He (Mr. Redmond) should say that he did not believe the fellow-countrymen of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham of to-day or the verdict of history in future years would entirely acquit him of the guilt if the result of this measure should be to revive in Ireland scenes of bloodshed and disturbance. Irish Members had, however, to face the probability that this Bill would pass into law. Hon. Gentlemen opposite reminded him of the celebrated French Minister who went to war with a light heart. He doubted, however, whether their cheers would be so loud after six months' experience of the working of the Bill. He almost shuddered when he thought what the consequences might be; but he was not without hope that many of those consequences might be avoided. One good result had already followed the introduction of this measure. It had cemented the union of the democracies of the two nations. [*Laughter.*] He would not do hon. Members opposite the injustice of interpreting that laugh to mean that they desired the peoples of the two countries to remain asunder. The democracies of the two countries were drawing closer together, and the introduction of this Bill would unite them still more closely. The attitude of the Liberal Party in the House, and the outburst of sympathy with Ireland by the people out-of-doors, would rob this Bill of much of its bitterness and many of its dangers. It was true that the Bill would entail many sufferings on his fellow-countrymen; but if those sufferings were borne, as he fervently prayed they might be, with patience and with fortitude, he believed that, in the end, the result of the measure would be to hasten the arrival of the day when Ireland would be united to the Empire which her sons had so greatly helped to build up, by a Union based, not as the present Union was now upon force, but upon the willing assent of a free and a self-governing people.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am somewhat reluctant to take part in this debate, because I feel that the subject has been exhausted by speakers on one side or the other. Certainly, arguments of a somewhat conflicting character have been urged against the Bill. Some hon. Members opposite have asserted that there is no case for the introduction of the Bill, and that the condition of Ireland is so satisfactory that no change in the Criminal Law and no improvement in the administration of the law are needed. On the other hand, the bulk of the speeches delivered by hon. Members opposite below the Gangway have underlying them this assumption—that the state of Ireland is such that a measure more or less resembling the late Home Rule Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) is essential before the aspirations of Ireland can be satisfied. It seems to me that these two lines of argument are wholly inconsistent with each other. I leave it, however, to hon. Members opposite to reconcile these inconsistent arguments, as I prefer a less ambitious line, and to deal with the case of this very Bill which is now before us. Now, it has been said more than once that we do not base this Bill upon any extraordinary or abnormal amount of agrarian crime at this moment, and yet I do not think that that argument should be pressed too far. Outrages, it is said, are not numerous enough to demand the energies and complete administration of the law for the protection of persons and property. Yet I should have thought that a gradual rise of agrarian outrages was enough to attract the attention and awaken the solicitude of those who are responsible for the public peace. In 1884 there were 762 agrarian outrages; in 1885 there were 916; and last year there were 1,025. There are two versions of the figures, but I take the lowest. Well, that is not an inconsiderable rise, and it is not unworthy the attention of the House. Now, let us compare the months. In October, November, and December last year, the numbers were respectively 54, 55, and 57. In January, February, and March this year, the numbers of outrages were 65, 77, and 99.

MR. W. H. K. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): Is that an official Return?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes; I have it in my hands.

MR. W. H. K. REDMOND: Has it been laid upon the Table?

MR. MATTHEWS: It will be in the hands of hon. Members in the course of a day or two. There have been 241 agrarian outrages in the last quarter—from January to March, 1887. Since October, 1886, outrages in Ireland have risen 83 per cent per month. These are figures which cannot be neglected; but we prefer to rest our case upon this broader ground. We say that nobody who knows the state of Ireland can fail to see that throughout large districts in Ireland there are in active operation Societies which call themselves Local Committees of the National League, and which consist of a set of busybodies and petty tyrants, who pry into every transaction of trade and business, in order to constrain and coerce the liberties of decent men to carry on their business in an honest way. These Local Committees interfere between man and man with a minuteness and pettiness of tyranny which I do not think has ever been equalled in the annals of any civilized country. They exact from men apologies because they have earned an honest wage from some harmless neighbour who happens to have fallen under the ban of these local tyrants. They exact apologies from men doing what they have a right to do, and if obedience is not given to their decrees they Boycott those who have disobeyed them, publishing their names in the newspapers and holding them up to execration. We all know what follows that. We all know that from step to step life is made intolerable. The person who has offended is denied food when he is in health, medicine when he is ill, and decent burial when he is dead. ["No, no!"] Yes; and if these means have not been successful there have come then the midnight outrages and the noonday deeds of violence, which we have heard described in the evidence given before the Royal Commission, and which are rampant in many parts of Ireland. Those facts have not been denied by those who have spoken candidly on this question on the opposite side. Is it to be said that the Government are to ignore these facts; and can it be suggested that there are not enough of these outrages; that the existence of a sufficient amount of crime has not been made out; and that a sufficient number of girls have not been thrown out upon the highway? [*A laugh.*] An hon. Member sneers at these things. How many of them are we to stand idly by and witness and tolerate with folded arms before we interfere and see that the law is enforced? We take the liberty of saying that it is our duty, whatever the number may be, and although the tale may not have been increased—we say that it is our duty at once, as the responsible Government, to interfere and stop these things. Will the ordinary law stop them in Ireland? Sir, Her Majesty's Government have, I think, conscientiously and patiently tried the experiment since last August of seeing whether the ordinary law would stop the existing state of things, and introduce greater security for law and order in Ireland, and with great regret and reluctance they have come to the conclusion that the institution of trial by jury has broken down in that country. Sir, the whole course of this debate has proved it—hon. Members below the Gangway opposite are never tired of telling us that the people of Ulster are not a people to be trusted with the lives and liberties of their Catholic fellow-countrymen. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) gave us special facts which were enough to make our blood run cold. He told us that jurors from motives of private spite or malice were prepared, against the evidence and against their oaths, to convict men of crimes of which they knew them to be innocent, and of which the Government knew they were innocent. Can we imagine a more terrible indictment brought against the jurors of any country than that which is charged against the jurors of Ireland by the hon. Member for the City of Cork? And yet the hon. Member for Wexford (Mr. J. Redmond), who has just sat down, whose speeches are always interesting and worth listening to, claims the administration of justice by such jurors as the palladium of justice in Ireland, and of the liberties of the Irish people, without which the whole Constitution would be imperilled. The jurors of the North and South are attacked, and I should like to know what jury you would entrust with the trial of the man who caused the unfortunate death of the man Hanlon. A great deal has been said about jury-packing in Ireland; but let me remind the House that the right of Crown challenge which goes by that name is as old as the right of trial by jury itself. Do you suppose that that right is not as hateful to the Government as to anybody else, and that the officials of any Government have recourse to it without reluctance and regret? Consider what the exercise of that right means. It means that out of every panel of jurors which is returned in Ireland, one-half or more are distrusted by the Crown. [An IRISH MEMBER: Catholics.] Well, Catholic, if you please, so be it; more than one-half are persons whom the agents of the Crown dare not trust to return a fair verdict. And what happens in regard to the remaining half? They are denounced by hon. Members opposite below the Gangway as "Castle machines and Castle hacks," who are ready to imbrue themselves in innocent blood. Therefore, so far as the jury panel is concerned, which you regard as the palladium of justice and of the liberties of Ireland, one-half is distrusted by the Crown, and the other half execrated by the friends of the traversers. What I believe an Irishman means by a fair jury is a jury of 12 of his relations and friends. It is sufficient, therefore, for the Government to say that in these partizan or so-called popular cases the Government cannot rely upon a jury in Ireland to act impartially between the Crown and the accused. I am the last man to set little store by trial by jury. I have spent many years of my life in addressing juries in this country, where we have happily passed the age of those vehement passions which still exist in Ireland, and where trial by jury is one of the most precious safeguards of our institutions, and one which Englishmen value most. But there were times, and not so long ago, when even in this country trial by jury was corrupt and put to bad uses and bad purposes, and when it was not so free from blame as it is at the present time. That will be always so when juries are influenced by fear or favour, because you place in the hands of 12 silent and irresponsible judges a power so tremendous that they are liable to become the instruments of injustice. When you can select jurors of the right sort—[*Home Rule laughter*]—do not let me be met by a sneer—when I say the right sort, I mean men who are above favour and above fear, men who have neither passion nor faction in their minds—when you can choose men of the right sort trial by jury is a most valuable institution; but your jurors are, according to your own showing, impassioned partizans either on one side or on the other. Can anybody who knows Ireland say that terrorism is not exercised in the jury-box—that the names of jurors who give unpopular verdicts are not advertised, and the people told that if they do not Boycott those men they will be coerced into doing so? I hold in my hand a copy of a letter which appeared in *The Kerry Evening Post* on the 29th of January last, which is headed "Boycotting Cork Butter Merchants," and is as follows:—

> "To the farmers of Kerry.—At the late Cork Winter Assizes a large number of men were convicted on charges of Moonlighting on the notoriously false evidence of police witnesses. Amongst the pliant jurors who did the work of the Crown were to be found two Kerry men—namely, Dominick Cronin and Terence M'Mahon, with whom the people of Kerry have had extensive dealings in the butter trade. Farmers of Kerry, will you continue, during the coming season, to send your butter to these worse than Belfast Orangemen? You have other men in the Cork Butter Exchange from your own country who would disdain to do the dirty work which Cronin and M'Mahon have done, and why not patronize them instead? If you do not do as requested, and Boycott these tools of the Crown, you will be coerced into doing so. Do it voluntarily, or severe measures will be taken to compel you. There are plenty of men still in Kerry prepared to follow in the footsteps of those whom Cronin and M'Mahon have helped to send to a convict cell, and who will not stick at trifles to obtain revenge.—(Signed) CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT."

A Common Jury in this country, at least, would find no difficulty in determining whether a conspiracy has been a criminal one or a lawful one; but these are the sort of arguments that are addressed to jurymen in Ireland, and Her Majesty's Government think that it is neither reasonable nor fair to expect from men who are exposed not merely to the sympathies of kindred or neighbours, but also to terrorism of this kind, that they should return unbiassed verdicts. Trial by jury is not absolutely withdrawn, because the power of trial by jury exists unaltered under the Bill. ["Oh!"] Is that denied? If so, hon. Gentlemen have not made themselves acquainted with the Bill. If they had, they would have found that there is in the Bill a clause expressly saving the concurrent jurisdiction of magistrates, and it is only to certain offences which are selected and minutely described in the Bill that the summary jurisdiction is applied. One feature is that it deals only with offences which are already crimes under the existing law, and for certain of those offences it creates a summary jurisdiction, thus relieving Irish juries from tasks they have proved themselves unable to bear. This Bill is not directed at combinations among tenants to pay only a reduced rent, provided they do not have recourse to violence or unlawful means. It aims only at criminal conspiracies. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) tells us that criminal conspiracy is a very difficult offence to define and to try, and that it is too difficult for a Resident Magistrate to try. But, if that is so, is it not also too difficult for a jury to try? The education and the knowledge of the law possessed by the Resident Magistrates is surely equal to that of a Common Jury, and Common Juries have not found such cases too difficult to decide, in this country at least. All the exaggerated talk, therefore, by many Members against this Bill seems to me to fall flat when we bear in mind that this summary jurisdiction is limited to the particular class of offences which is described in this 2nd section, and in regard to which the fairness and courage of a jury may well be doubted. Whatever the tribunal may be, you will have some difficulties to contend with in the application of the Criminal Law of Conspiracy. But the point of this Bill is that you are not making or altering offences, or enlarging the scope of offences. On the contrary, you are picking out some particular classes of criminal conspiracy which certainly are not the most difficult to deal with in a summary manner. The insuperable difficulties of administering the Law of Conspiracy are not avoided altogether by this clause, but certainly they are not aggravated. The cases that are intended to be dealt with by this clause are, of course, the petty cases. Some hon. Gentlemen have spoken as if seditious libel was to be dealt with, but seditious libel does not come under this clause at all. Nothing savouring of sedition, treason, or any political offence comes within this clause, which only strikes at that class of Boycotting which is a pestilent, mischievous, tyrannical, and heinous interference which is aimed at the liberty of private life and contract and personal dealing. Those are the things which are struck at by this Bill, and also riot, unlawful assembly, assaulting Sheriffs' officers, bailiffs, and police constables, and they are matters which a Resident Magistrate in Ireland is able to deal with at the present moment. The summary jurisdiction conferred by the Bill deals with a class of offences which are mischievous in the highest degree, and destructive of social order and individual happiness, but which are not deserving of being magnified by the pomp of an Assize trial by jury. These offences are properly dealt with by swift and immediate punishment of small amount, not exceeding six months' imprisonment. [An hon. Member: And hard labour.] Certainly hard labour for an assault on a constable in the execution of his duty. This is known to the English law. Here, in London, where we are not, certainly, living in the atmosphere of Warsaw, any person who assaults a police constable in the execution of his duty is liable to receive a sentence of six months' hard labour, and I see no reason why, in the latitude of Kerry, offences of that sort should not be dealt with in the same way. Then the Resident Magistrates are made the subject of attack. One hon. Member—I think the hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce)—has stated that Resident Magistrates are irremovable, and, therefore, that they are necessarily corrupt and time-serving officials and Castle hacks. Can a case be cited where they have been removed except on account of infirmity? [Mr. T. C. Harrington (Dublin, Harbour): Yes; Mr. Butler.] He was removed because it was considered that he was not equal to the discharge of his duty. As far as I know, no case can be cited where a Resident Magistrate has been removed because he has not done the bidding of the Castle. I should like to hear of an Irish Secretary who had the courage to remove a Resident Magistrate because he failed to convict where the Castle wanted conviction, in a case where the evidence did not justify conviction. No such case has been alleged, and I do not believe that one can be alleged, or that one exists. Thus the case stands, as far as summary procedure is concerned. This section applies to cases which admit of light treatment—that is, of punishment not exceeding six months' imprisonment with hard labour, which is a punishment applied to similar offences in this country. This summary jurisdiction supersedes, it is true, trial by jury, but simply because trial by jury has turned out to be unfit for these cases. An hon. Member has pointed out how largely summary jurisdiction has been carried out in this country. Within the last eight or 10 years half-a-dozen Statutes have been passed extending summary jurisdiction in England. In many cases, the option is given to the prisoner to be dealt with summarily if he so prefers. [An hon. Member: Hear, hear!] I expected that cheer; but, surely, if this alternative is given by the law of England, it cannot be such abominable legislation as hon. Members below the Gangway endeavour to make out. If in England the law allows summary jurisdiction to the magistrates, with the power of imposing a sentence of six months' imprisonment with hard labour, it does not lie in the mouths of hon. Gentlemen opposite to say that the jurisdiction we propose to confer upon the Resident Magistrates in Ireland, together with the power of inflicting punishment, is so monstrous as to imperil the whole of the Constitution. Then there are, of course, the graver offences; and now I come to that part of the Bill which has been most severely criticized—offences of murder, attempts at murder, aggravated assaults with violence, and firing into houses—which are mentioned in the 4th section of the Bill. If the Government are right in coming to the conclusion that juries in Ireland are either influenced or terrorized in partizan cases of the kind to which I have referred, and that it is not expedient to trust them with the higher class of offences, surely the conclusion applies with much greater strength to the graver class of offences. Does anybody suppose that it would be easy in Kerry to get an impartial jury to try such a case as that of Byers or Murphy? Byers was murdered within a few yards of a railway station, with policemen in front of him and policemen behind him, by half-a-dozen men firing over a stone wall, and yet not one single person interfered to assist him, or even to pick up his dead body, still less to take one step towards discovering the murderers. Do you suppose that in Kerry it would be easy to find a jury who would impartially deal with such a case. Do you suppose that prejudice, and passion, and fear would not have operated upon them? Then how are you going to try a case such as the murder of Byers? It is beyond the utmost ingenuity of man, unless you adopt the scheme proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) in 1882, and try the prisoner before a Commission of three Judges—or unless you try him by a jury in England. There is much to be said for both systems. Far be it from me to be enthusiastic in favour of the suggestion of the Government; but it is, at all events, less of a departure from the ordinary course of things than the proposal made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby in 1882. He, at least, kept his criminal in Ireland, trying him by Irish Judges; but I think it is only fair to say that that system failed in the sense that it was only applied once or twice. [*Cries of* "Never!"] I thought that it was applied in one or two cases, but that it failed, whether from reluctance on the part of the Judges to undertake a task which was uncongenial to them, or whether because the machinery was cumbrous, I am unable to say. At all events, it is the only other device. If you think that Irish juries are not fit to try these grave cases, the ingenuity of man can suggest nothing else than either the trial by Judges or trial by an English jury. Her Majesty's Government have selected trial by a jury in England as most fair and most in accordance with the Constitution, and I venture to express my sincere conviction that an English jury will be chivalrously fair to a prisoner under those circumstances, and that, in addition to giving effect in their minds to any doubt that may arise in favour of the prisoner, they will give him, in ample measure, the full benefit of their sympathy, whether as coming from a distance and being away from his country and his kindred, or lest he should be in some embarrassment as to the conduct of his defence. I believe that all these elements will be of great advantage to him, and that such considerations will avail him in his defence. If you amend this clause so as to make it an alternative one, and if you give the prisoner the option of choosing whether he will be tried according to the method suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, or by a jury in England, I believe that nine out of ten Irishmen will choose to be tried by an English jury, and will prefer, under the equitable and fair provisions of this Bill, to come over here to be tried in England rather than remain in Ireland to be tried by the Irish Judges. That is the object of the Government in this part of the Bill. If you cannot find an unbiassed, impartial, unprejudiced, and fearless jury in Ireland, you must seek it in England. We prefer this course as the most Constitutional one, and we remove these cases from Ireland, where they cannot be tried impartially, to England. Where the issues are those of life or death, or involve sentences of penal servitude for many years, and are not merely petty violations of the law to be punished with a short term of imprisonment, we prefer that trial by jury should be retained, and that it should be held in a place where jurors are uninfluenced either by favour or by fear, and where they are always inclined on the side of the criminal and very rarely in favour of the Crown. I think that there is no one who will venture to impeach the fairness of an English jury, and least of all of an Old Bailey jury; and I think that even hon. Members below the Gangway will hardly suggest that a "Castle hack" is likely to find his way into an English jury-box. I do not intend to dwell upon any other detail of the Bill. These are its broad outlines. The jury system has failed in Ireland, and we have, therefore, introduced these provisions. The cruelty, the severity, and the harshness of this measure have been dilated upon by hon. Members below the Gangway; but one hon. Member—I think it was one who spoke from this side of the House—but it is not necessary that I should follow him—pointed out how much more severe were the Acts of 1870 and 1882. Those measures were full of enactments which introduced arbitrary powers contrary to the spirit of the Constitution. Do not let me be understood to say that the abolition of trial by jury is not a curtailment of liberty, and that the jury system is not part of the Constitution; but it is impossible, for a moment, to compare the introduction of summary trial for petty classes of offences with the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, or the Curfew Clauses of the Act of 1882, or the arrest of strangers found in suspicious circumstances, or the power of the Lord Lieutenant to suspend newspapers introduced into the earlier Coercion Acts. It is clear, I think, to any man who approaches the subject with a candid mind, that the clauses which we propose are far more in conformity with both the letter and the spirit of the law and the Constitution than those which I have mentioned, because the latter gave to officials and to the Executive a large amount of arbitrary power to interfere with both liberty and property, such as the power of searching for arms and requiring licences, all of which are wanting in the Bill which is now before the House, and all of which have been deliberately omitted by Her Majesty's Government. It is the mildest Act of Coercion that has been seen in the last 17 years. I challenge disproof of that statement by anyone who impartially compares it with the other Acts passed in that time. But there are other arguments used against us. We are told that it is a wretched expedient which has failed before. I do not think that it is possible to maintain this, when we consider how complete and absolute was the success which attended the Act of 1882. The figures in their full significance have not hitherto been laid before the House. In the 12 months before the Act there were altogether 5,237 agrarian offences—that is to say, from July, 1881, to the end of June, 1882. I am unable to give the figures of the six months of 1882 which followed immediately after the passing of the Act, because the figures for January are not given separately; but, taking the total of offences in 1883, we find that they had fallen to 870. Murders had fallen from 24 in the 12 months preceding the Act to one in 1883; firing at the person from 86 in the 12 months preceding the Act to 9 in 1883; firing into dwelling houses from 199 to 19; killing and maiming cattle from 171 to 65; and threatening letters from 1,422 to 420. That, I say, was an extraordinary and a complete success, and it showed that the Act of 1882 was an Act much more skilfully and wisely conceived than the Act of 1881; because the Act of 1882, although it contained a vast number of arbitary powers, which, I am happy to say, were not extensively acted upon, except, perhaps, in the case of searching for arms—I do not think there was more than one exercise of the power of seizing newspapers—that Act, in its summary clauses, which dealt with petty mischiefs in the manner they deserved—namely, by swift and certain punishment, not waiting for the pomp of the Assizes and the three months' delay, during which sympathy gathers round the criminal—that Act, I say, dealt in the right way with those social mischiefs, and the results will, I think, redound for many a year to the credit of the right hon. Gentleman who introduced it. Just let us look at the results. Agrarian crime, which stood in 1882 at 944, gradually dropped off till the Act ceased to operate, when again it began to rise. In 1883 agrarian offences numbered 870; in 1884, 762; in 1885, 916; and in 1886, 1,025. And if you will look at the details you will find that threatening letters were the only offences less numerous in 1886 than in 1885, whereas firing at the person increased from 12 to 16 cases; killing and maiming cattle from 59 to 73; and firing into dwellings from 53 to 143. These statistics illustrate the complete success of that form of coercion. I know that persons who appear in this House for the purpose of defending the cause of law and order are habitually met with a sneer; but I deny that a measure under which persons receive a punishment which they deserve is properly called a measure of coercion. I say that that is the healthy and right regimen of every well-ordered society, and the best proof of it is shown in the fact that it instantly operated in Ireland. I am not one of those who believe that the Irish people are more inclined to crime than ourselves; on the contrary, they are not so. It is true that crimes of violence to the person have for several years been more numerous in Ireland in proportion to the population than in England; but ordinary crime, to the honour of Ireland, has always been much less frequent and much more rare. Agrarian offences are the special plague-spot of Ireland. It is a minute section of the people who allow themselves to commit these offences, and when you mete out to those persons the treatment and punishment they deserve the effect is instantaneous. Notwithstanding, as I said at starting, it is with regret and reluctance that Her Majesty's Government have introduced an exceptional measure. We did hope, for many months, that the ordinary law would be sufficient; and we made attempts to introduce in Ireland a better feeling, and a swifter and more certain administration of the law. When Sir Redvers Buller was sent to Kerry, I am sure the House has not forgotten the howl of execration with which that officer's name was greeted by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite. He was described as a General fit only to cope with savages, and it was said he was going to administer in Kerry some brutal system of military law, of which no man had ever seen the like; but now that distinguished officer has grown almost to be an idol. He was sent to inquire into the real condition of things in Ireland, so as to apply the best remedy in the surest way. These efforts of ours were, however, every one of them abused and vilified. Then followed the agitation of November and the Plan of Campaign, which certainly, despite what hon. Members opposite contend, has not done vast good in Ireland. There have since then been failures of justice, for I must call them so; and among others I will cite the trial of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), in which, upon admitted facts, and upon a state of the law that cannot be contested, the jury, who were reviled beforehand as being a packed jury, against whom no language was too strong, disagreed, although the facts were not in dispute. Is that a due and proper administration of the law? It may be said the law should be altered; that it should be lawful for a man to enter into conspiracy to defraud —it may be that these things should not be in the Criminal Law; but as long as the law is as it is, the result of that trial was a scandal to the administration of justice in Ireland. I say, also, that since November lawlessness has spread in Ireland to an extraordinary and alarming extent, and resistance to the officers of the law has become more common. The hon. Member for East Mayo, who I do not now see in his place, said once that Mayo and those parts of Ireland were something like Surrey; but do you suppose that if in Surrey an eviction were taking place the people would tolerate for one moment the barricading of houses; a state of regular siege; the pouring of boiling water and the throwing of brick-bats on the Sheriff's officers? Do you suppose that in Surrey armed bands would be allowed to go about shooting into the legs of men because they paid their rent? Do you suppose that Englishmen would look on unmoved when lawlessness of that sort spreads and becomes daily more audacious and more defiant? Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that they cannot. We are told by hon. Members opposite that we ought to begin by redressing grievances. I will make two answers to that. We say that the very first thing that calls for redress is these midnight outrages and this daily tyranny. That is the first social want of Ireland, and the first thing that we have to redress. The second answer that we make is, that it does not lie in the mouths of those who do not content themselves with Constitutional agitation, but who have recourse to violence and outrage, to talk about redress preceding repression. We say—"Use Constitutional agitation yourselves, and not violence or outrage." It has been urged upon us by more than one Member of the Opposition that the measure is opposed by a majority of the Irish Members for the first time. I doubted that statement when I first heard it, and I have looked at the authentic records of the House for 1882. Here is an analysis of two Divisions on the Bill of that year—the second reading stage, and on the Motion for going into Committee. On the second reading I find that 36 Irish Members voted against the Bill, and 23 Irish Members voted for it. On going into Committee I find that the figures are even more marked—38 Irish Members voted against going into Committee, and 20 Irish Members voted in favour. Therefore a majority of those who voted were against the Bill. And am I to be told that those who abstained from voting were in favour of the Bill? If they belonged to that class which is in favour of the preservation of law and order, what possible motive could they have in abstaining from voting? Those who abstained were

Members of the Party opposite who did not like to vote against their Party, and who did not dare to vote for them on account of their constituents. Therefore I say it is not true to say that this is the first time when a majority of the Irish Members have voted against what they are pleased to call a Coercion Bill. Another point made against the Government is that Her Majesty's Opposition are against the Bill. That is most true; it is the first time that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have refused to support the Government in a Bill which they consider necessary for repressing crime and upholding the law. But they do more than that. Not only do they refuse us their support in that matter, but they use language in this House which is as unprecedented as their conduct in opposing this Bill. They have used language which I, as a plain man, can only understand as being a palliation of the outrages under which Ireland is suffering. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley), of whom I desire to speak with the greatest respect, told us that outrages in Ireland were the excusable consequence of moral wrong without a legal remedy, and that outrages were illegal acts to secure something like moral rights. That was the language which the right hon. Gentleman used in this House. What are the moral wrongs alluded to, and for which there is no legal remedy in Ireland except violence and outrage? It is this—that some landlords in Ireland insist on the fulfilment of contracts that have been made against them by the State under the Land Act of 1881, and because, forsooth, it is alleged that some rents which were fixed under the Act of 1881 have become too high by reason of the fall in prices! This is what the right hon. Gentleman is pleased to style a moral wrong. If the landlord says,—"Pay those rents or go; abide by the bargain made against me, and in your interest by the State." That is what is called a moral wrong. The right hon. Gentleman says it is a moral wrong where a man simply insists on the rights left to him as the wreck of what was the fuller property and fuller right taken by the State under an Act of Parliament of which Her Majesty's Opposition were the authors. It appears to me that language of that sort is calculated to encourage lawlessness in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was somewhat more cautious. He contented himself by quoting Sir Redvers Buller, without saying whether he assented or dissented from him; and he insinuated in the quotation made from General Buller's evidence that the law in Ireland was against the poor and in favour of the rich. [Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: Hear, hear!] The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby cheers that phrase; but whose law is it in Ireland but the law of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian? What has he been doing since 1870 except tampering with the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland, and altering it according to his views? He has passed Act after Act, announcing each as the final measure of justice, all of them in favour of the tenant, all of them against the landlord; and yet he is to be allowed to insinuate rather than to say it—and the right hon. Member cheers the sentiment—that this law which they themselves have created is a law all in favour of the rich and all against the poor. I repeat that it is unprecedented on an occasion like this, when men's passions are roused, even without such language, that language of this kind, encouraging lawlessness and palliating outrage, should be uttered in this House. And I cannot forget that this language is explained by this circumstance—that the victory of lawlessness over order in Ireland would now constitute a Party advantage for hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. If lawlessness can only win the day their argument against us that we cannot govern Ireland will be clinched and will be successful. A right hon. Gentleman told us a night or two ago that there was nothing between the Government and civil war in Ireland but the attitude of the Liberal Party, because it was counselling moderation in order to prevent any outbreak of violent resistance in spite of this dreadful Bill of ours. One distinguished Member of the Liberal Party is the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), and I see he announced yesterday that he hoped the Irish people were going to resist the Bill. Those are the counsels of moderation which the hon. Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) says the Liberal Party are going to promulgate. The hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) told us the other night that he was prepared, if the Bill passed, to lead his countrymen to battle if they are able and willing. ["No!"] Those are the very words he used—["No!"]—if his countrymen were able and willing, he was willing to lead them to battle. ["No, no!"] It was a sort of conditional civil war, a sort of conditional high treason. Luckily for the hon. Member, it was hedged in with conditions which cannot be fulfilled. His countrymen—the Irishmen—are not willing. But these are the counsels of moderation which the hon. Member for South Aberdeen tells us are interposed between us and the Irish people. The hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) told us that there would be no room for politicians when this Bill passed, and an hon. Member has said he sincerely hoped that there will be nobody to take the place of the politicians. We know what these hints mean. The hon. Member for the City of Cork told us on one occasion that it was his denunciation that broke up the conspiracy of the Invincibles. He prides himself, therefore, on the fact that he is able to check acts such as those which characterized that remarkable conspiracy; and when he and his lieutenants tell us of the dangers that will meet us—we shall not call these threats, but we understand what these hints mean—we heartily despise them, and we say that they will not alter any course we are prepared to take in the slightest degree. We appeal, not to Hyde Park demonstrations, but to the judgment of the House of Commons—the proper tribunal to deal with questions of this kind. We appeal to the sober judgment of the House of Commons, and we ask them to support us in upholding in Ireland the authority of the Queen and the authority of the law.

Mr. STANSFELD (Halifax): The speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has just sat down is sufficient of itself to show the breadth and depth of the political differences that divide us. I hold with the strongest expressions of disapprobation which have been uttered in this House against the measure we are now considering. It seems to be supposed by some hon. Members that it is enough to say that this is a mild measure, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary has said, and to argue that more stringent measures have before been placed upon the Statute Book. But, in my opinion, we must judge of a Coercion Bill of this sort, not merely with reference to its contents, but with reference to the circumstances of the time, and to a consideration to which no Member of the Government has yet—so far as I have noticed—addressed his mind and his speech, and that is the prospect and the probability of the Bill fulfilling the very purposes of its authors. Now, the Home Secretary, I must remind the House, commenced his speech by the declaration that he did not base this Bill on statistics of the amount of crime. In that respect the right hon. Gentleman followed closely in the footsteps of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland; but, in that case, I fail to see either the reason or the justification of that part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech in which he compared this measure with the measure of 1882, which, he said, had been a brilliant success. What justification can there be, on the score of the repression or diminution of crime, for a Coercion Bill if one of the advocates of that Bill begins his statement by saying that he has no case founded on the statistics of the increase of crime. And I ought also to say this—that although the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland and other Members of the Government have been exceedingly ready to compare this Bill and this occasion with the occasion and the Bill of 1882 of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), they have not reminded the House of the fundamental and essential difference in the circumstances of the two cases. They have forgotten to inform the House that the measure of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was introduced immediately after the perpetration of those foul and brutal murders in the Phœnix Park, which aroused the indignation of the United Kingdom, and of the Nationalist Party no less than any other Party in this House. And he forgot also, and they have also forgotten, to make the admission that the Bill of 1882 was also founded on the statements advanced by the right hon. Gentleman of the existence and multiplication of secret societies in the Sister Isle. Sir, there are no secret societies now.

[*Ministerial laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen may laugh. Perhaps they will have the goodness to reply to me, and to offer some proof of their denial. I say that the facts at present are that you have, as the Government know, a National League which is not a secret society, and I have not yet heard from any Member of the Government the statement that secret societies exist as they existed in the year 1882, though I am here, for one, to say that one of the first consequences of this Bill, should it become an Act, will be the revival of secret societies. Then the Attorney General for Ireland—and if I may go back for a moment to his speech—challenged us on this side of the House because we had not gone into the discussion of the provisions of the Bill itself. He seemed to think that some of us had not read it, and he thought we ought to discuss it more seriously and in greater detail. Well, if the House will allow me to occupy a small portion of its time I propose to go through two or three clauses of the Bill which I hold to be of the most essential importance, and to say what I think of them, and what I believe to be their purport and their legal effect. I would say, in the first instance, that I noted that the Attorney General for Ireland in his speech passed somewhat rapidly and lightly over the 2nd, the 6th, and the 7th clauses—that is to say, over the 2nd clause, relating to the summary jurisdiction of the Resident Magistrates, and the 6th and 7th clauses, which give the power which is to be exercised for the suppression of the National League; and the Attorney General for Ireland discussed at far greater length other and, in my opinion, far less important clauses and portions of this Bill. There was another omission in the speech of the Attorney General for Ireland which struck me, and which must have struck other Members of the House, and that was that in expounding the 2nd clause, —the Summary Jurisdiction Clause—he entirely omitted any reference to the crime of conspiracy with which that clause commences. The Attorney General for Ireland knows well enough, I take leave to think, the great objection which both lawyers and laymen have to that doctrine, that dangerous doctrine, of criminal conspiracy, and the still greater objection they have to its extension by a Bill of this description. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary has said that no new offences are created, and that there is no extension of the Law of Conspiracy by this Bill. Well, that is a matter of legal interpretation, to be discussed, probably, with greater advantage in Committee on the Bill; but I must express a serious doubt whether, when we come to discuss all the sub-sections of the 2nd clause, we shall not find that the doctrine of criminal conspiracy has received a decided extension by that section. In referring to the 1st sub-section, the right hon. and learned Gentleman said it would not apply to any combination of tenants where there was not intimidation——

MR. MATTHEWS: I may explain that any combination of tenants in which they agree between themselves to pay a lower rent, without using any means of coercion on the landlord, would be a lawful and not a criminal combination.

MR. STANSFELD: Then, what I say in reply is this. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman will look at the 1st sub-section, he will find these words—

> "Any person who shall take part in any criminal conspiracy to compel or induce any person or persons either not to fulfil his or their legal obligations, or not to let, hire, use, or occupy any land,"

and so on. So that, therefore, the combination of two or more tenants who invite other tenants to join them for the purpose of resisting the payment of an unjust or exorbitant rent will be a "criminal conspiracy" under this subsection. That, at any rate, is my interpretation of it. ["No, no!"] The right hon. and learned Gentleman tells me I am wrong. I must bow for the moment to his superior legal knowledge. On coming to deal with these clauses, let me first of all state a subject of agreement amongst us. I believe we are all agreed that this Coercion Bill is an entirely new departure in one respect. In all former Coercion Bills, the case of the Government has been founded on the amount of crime and the increase of crime; but now we have the distinct statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the Home Secretary that their Bill is not based either on the amount, or the present or possible future increase, of crime. [MR. MATTHEWS: Not mainly.] Well, not mainly. The Chief Secretary told us that the main objects of the Bill were not the punishment of crime; but, as I understood him, that the sufficient reason for the Bill—the main, and, therefore, the sufficient reason for the Bill—was based on these two considerations—the break-down of the jury system, and the existence of the operations of the National League. But though that was the case of the Chief Secretary, he did say that there had been a decided increase of crime during the last three years. Well, I have looked into some of the figures, and I cannot agree with the Chief Secretary. The words he used, I think, were "a steady increase of crime during the last three years." I have here some of the official figures, and their effect is somewhat curious as well as instructive. The figures relate to the years 1885 and 1886—and I beg the House to remember that it was in the summer of 1885 that the Marquess of Salisbury's Government determined and avowed their conclusion that there was not sufficient crime in Ireland to justify the enactment or continuance of a Bill of this description. Now, what has taken place since then? I have here all the figures of agrarian crime—excluding threatening letters, which, it is generally admitted, are not of first importance. I find that in the quarter ending March, 1885, there were 73 cases; in the June quarter, 105; September, 139; and December, 172. So far the figures are not great, considering the population of Ireland, but they justify the statement of the right hon. Gentleman as to a constant increase of crime. Then I come to 1886. In 1886 the numbers were — for the March quarter, 135; June, 179; September, 199; and December—the last completed quarter before this Bill was conceived—the number had dropped down from 199 to no greater a number than 94. I have also taken out a comparison between the figures for the year 1880 and those for 1886, because reference has been made to the Bill of my late lamented friend Mr. W. E. Forster of 1880. I find that in the quarter ending September, 1880, the number of agrarian crimes, including threatening letters, was 361, and in the quarter ending on the last day of December that number had risen to no less than 1,675. Contrasting those figures with similar figures for 1886, I find that in that year, in the quarter ending September 30, the number of these offences was 306, and that in the quarter ending December 31, 1886, the number had fallen to no greater a number than 166. I think that these figures are very remarkable, and that they ought to be borne in mind. They prove the statement of the Chief Secretary that the Bill is not founded on the amount of crime, or the possible increase of crime, and that its main object is not the repression of crime. The main object of the measure, without question, is to defeat the combination of the tenants against the landlords, who, whatever the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary may say to-night, have been condemned by their own Commission, because their own Commission has reported to them that rents ought to be reduced, many of them being extortionate and impossible. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in the policy of Her Majesty's Government is that they have turned round on their own Commission, and have determined not to carry out the principal recommendation that they have made. I should like to make this remark here. I have pointed out the remarkable fall in the number of cases of crime in the quarter ending December last. To what is that fall to be attributed? Is it not to be attributed to the action of the late Chief Secretary, to the action of Sir Redvers Buller, to the action of the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon)? So far as I can judge, it is to be attributed to the reduction of the demands of the landlords. The fact that the landlords have been induced to come to reasonable terms with the tenantry has tended to the reduction of these agrarian offences; and, if so, I say, in the second place, that this decrease not only shows that there is no ground for asking for coercion, but it points out a better mode of action—which was pointed out by their own Commission—that is to say, compelling landlords to reduce extortionate demands, and procuring something like equity and justice for the unfortunate tenants. Well, the main case, as I understand it, of the Government — putting the question of the amount of crime on one side—is this, they base their claim to legislation of this character on the ground of what they call paralyzation of law. The jury system, they say, is unworkable. They declare that jurymen and witnesses are intimidated, that the National League and the Plan of Campaign have usurped the place of law, and have debauched and terrorized the people. They say the object of the Government is to restore law and order, and to give their remedial measures fair play. Well, Sir, we are of opinion that this Bill will have precisely the contrary effect, and that is, perhaps, the greatest difference between us. It is not enough to say that there are certain evils existing—that the jury system has broken down, that tenants will not pay the rents they are liable to pay, and so forth. What you have to do in proposing to Parliament a measure of this exceptional kind, interfering altogether with ordinary Constitutional principles, and with the liberty of the subject—what you have, at least, to show is not only that there is a case for some remedy, but that this is the true remedy, and the best remedy, and the one most likely to succeed. We are of the firm opinion that the Bill will have precisely the contrary effect. We believe that it will intensify the malady and drive it in. We believe that under it secret societies will multiply, and disaffection will increase. We hold the Bill to be tyrannous and monstrous, and I will justify these terms, if the House will allow me, before I sit down; but what I now say is that the policy of Her Majesty's Government is radically and fundamentally wrong, because we hold that it is certain to fail to secure those objects which its promoters claim to have in view. Now I come to the Bill itself. We are told that it creates no new offences. Well, but by the 2nd clause, first of all, if two tenants—as I have already said—combine to resist an unjust rent, and invite others to join them in that combination, they, according to my reading of the clause, become criminal conspirators. They not only do an illegal act, but they are brought within that law of criminal conspiracy which all liberal jurists are disinclined to extend, and about which so much has been said. In like manner, if they combine to refuse all dealings with others who are not with them in their struggle, again they come under the law of criminal conspiracy. The same clause deals with intimidation, making it an offence; and I should like to draw the attention of the House to the definition of intimidation in the 19th clause of the Bill. It is defined as follows:—

> "The expression 'intimidation' includes any words or acts intended and calculated to put any person in fear of any injury or danger to himself, or to any member of his family, or to any person in his employment, or in fear of any injury to or loss of property, business, employment, or means of living."

Therefore, I say that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), under that definition, was justified in his statement that if there were a Primrose League in Ireland, and its members followed their usual course of proceeding, they would come under this law, and the punishment is six months' imprisonment with hard labour, which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary considers a light and trivial punishment. Who are the judges? I have heard a great deal about the Resident Magistrates; but I do not undertake to pronounce any opinion upon them, or to say more about them than I gather from the pages of the Bill itself. I turn to Clause 11, and what I find is this—

> "The court of summary jurisdiction shall, within the police districts of Dublin Metropolis, be a divisional justice of that district, and elsewhere be two Resident Magistrates in petty sessions, one of whom shall be a person of the sufficiency of whose legal knowledge the Lord Lieutenant shall be satisfied,"

and so on. I infer from that that the other of the two will be a person of the sufficiency of whose legal knowledge the Lord Lieutenant will not be satisfied. I think that is a very fair inference for me to draw; and I would point out this—that if you put the most favourable construction on the way in which these men are likely to act, and if you assume that the one of admittedly insufficient legal knowledge bows to the decision of the other more capable of giving a legal opinion as to the construction of this difficult and delicate law of criminal conspiracy, it will come to this in Ireland—that the law which in this country is never administered or acted upon except by the combined action of some eminent Judge and a British jury, will be administered practically by one Resident Magistrate, supposing him to have satisfied the Lord Lieutenant of the sufficiency of his legal knowledge. At the end of the 2nd clause there is a sub-section—Sub-section 5—which says—

> "Any person who, by words or acts, shall incite, solicit, encourage, or persuade any other person to commit any of the offences hereinbefore mentioned."

There can be no doubt whatsoever that this sub-section will place every platform speaker, every newspaper writer, and, therefore, every newspaper, absolutely at the mercy of the Lord Lieutenant for the time being, and of his executive instruments, the Resident Magistrates of the country. But I would mention what is worse than that. The Attorney General for Ireland—I am not sure whether the Home Secretary followed his lead; but I know that the Attorney General for Ireland talked of the fact that the Bill is only to be applied according to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant, as if that were a feature which would recommend it to persons who cared for liberty and for law. To my mind, it makes it far worse. I can understand a Coercion Bill which defines the parts of Ireland to which a coercive measure ought to be applied, and which applies that coercive measure. That would be a law; but I say this is no law. It is not a law until the Lord Lieutenant makes it a law. He can suspend its operation; he can deal with it almost as he chooses. He can apply the whole of the Bill to the whole of Ireland; he can apply the whole of it to a part of Ireland; he can vary the application from one part to another; he can apply part of the measure to the whole of the country, or part of it to isolated portions. There is no limit to the way he can shuffle the cards of the measure if he is to apply it according to his discretion. As I say, provisions of this kind are not law, and do not become law when the Bill becomes an Act. The measure is, in fact, merely a catalogue of arbitrary powers vested in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant which he may use or not use according to his discretion; and I say, and we say on this side of the House, that it does not possess the necessary elements and characteristics of law or legality. I confess that when I heard the Attorney General, I had a feeling of amazement that a man so eminent—and deservedly eminent—in his Profession, a man caring, I presume, for the noble science of the profession to which he belongs, should have so readily and eagerly jumped at this measure—should have spoken of it as something which might be applied with great advantage to the whole of the United Kingdom, "a reasonable and a moderate measure;" and yet that it should never have entered into his head, as a lawyer and jurist, that the consideration I have just pointed out should have made it obnoxious to a man who cares for the principles of law as they ought to be applied in a free country. Two other clauses to which the Home Secretary has referred are Clauses 6 and 7. What is their operation? Clause 6 states that the Lord Lieutenant—

> "May from time to time by proclamation declare that the enactments of this Act relating to dangerous associations,"

—which I suppose means the National League under whatever name it may operate—"shall come into force;" and Clause 7 says, the Lord Lieutenant may from time to time

> "Prohibit or suppress in any district specified in the order, any association which he believes to be a dangerous association. From and after the date of such order, and during the continuance thereof, every assembly or meeting of such association, or of the members of it as such members,"

—and that means the bulk of the people of Ireland—

> "In the specified district, shall be an unlawful assembly, and the association itself shall be an unlawful association."

Any person connected with such association becomes an offender, and is liable to the punishment stated in the Bill. Now, I ask the House to mark this fact, that the National League is a League extending throughout the greater part of Ireland. The great bulk of the people of Ireland are, as I say, more or less in connection with that association, therefore, the vast majority of the people may be brought by the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant under the operations of the measure, and be made amenable to the punishment it enacts under the jurisdiction of the Resident Magistrates. Her Majesty's Government have staked their existence on this Bill, and they talk of the mandate they received at the last General Election on this subject. Sir, they received no mandate in favour of any such measure. Many supporters of the Government on both sides of the House secured their election by protesting against further coercion for Ireland. I do not believe that any one of their supporters ever dreamed at the Election of the passing of such a measure as this we are now discussing. But, I dispute this doctrine of the mandate entirely. There is no such thing known to our Constitution as a final mandate. There can be no such mandate. Any Act that is passed can be repealed. It is the right of any Party in this House—it is the right of any single Member—to appeal to this House and to Parliament against any particular Act, and to procure its repeal if possible, and in the last resort a Member can go even beyond the House, and appeal to public opinion; and if he can carry public opinion with him, the moment will come when the law or mandate of which he complains will be reversed. There is only one possible final answer to this question. A Coercion Bill passed into an Act and then repealed will be the last Coercion Act—as this, if passed, will be the last Coercion Act—and self-government once accorded to the Irish people will be, in our view, so safe, so satisfying, and so just, that once granted it will never be recalled. This would be a final Act, not because any mandate is final, but because of its nature and justification. The Government say—"You must maintain law and order." We have heard a great deal about the maintenance of law and order. Of course, you must maintain law and order; but the question is how best to maintain them, and that question has hardly been argued in this House at all. You must maintain law and order, but if your difficulty lies and rests in this fact, that you have refused to amend unjust laws, or have refused to give to the people that right of self-government which will set them on the side of the law, and make them respect it, and bring them into harmony with it—then I say that your duty is to amend those unjust laws and to give the people that right of self-government. With regard to the alleged failure of the jury system of which the Home Secretary has spoken, the Prime Minister said that it was not that the judicial system as a machine had broken down, but that there was one part of it where a wheel was out of order, and that was the jury system, and that that being out of order it must either be refitted or dispensed with. That very curt and official mode of thinking out the question, and of dealing with it, seems to have been adopted by the Home Secretary; but to us the jury system is a very different thing to what it appears to be in the mind of the Marquess of Salisbury. It is to us very much more than a part of a mechanical contrivance. The jury system, to our mind is, in the first place, a Constitutional right, though the Home Secretary has not shown the slightest sign that he has any sympathy with that question of Constitutional right. It appeared to him to be quite sufficient to show that the jury system, as he thought, had broken down to justify him in proposing to replace it by the proposal in this Bill—namely, of granting summary jurisdiction in such serious cases as criminal conspiracy. Our view, on the contrary, is this—that a Government which cannot rule without abolishing trial by jury is not fit to rule at all. We say that a Government which cannot rule Ireland without abolishing trial by jury is certain to fail egregiously in trying to govern her. They may appear to succeed, as Governments before have seemed for a time to succeed, with Coercion Bills; but this is not a Coercion Bill for a time. This is a Coercion Bill, so far as the Government can make it, for all time. They cannot alter the real character of a Coercion Bill. This Bill is essentially a temporary expedient, and it is one which, if passed into law, will last only as long as the Government, and its factitious majority, lasts in this House. I ask this question.—What can be more fatal than the alienation of a whole people from the law? The failure of the jury system points out the dangerous fact of that alienation, and the only remedy you suggest is to abolish the system. That course is about as wise as if a man were to hide from his view the index of a boiler pointing to danger, sit upon the safety-valve, and then complain of the consequences. The proper course is not to deal with the symptoms, not to deal with that which points out the danger, but to deal with the danger and its cause. We do not say—"Redress grievances before you apply the Criminal Law." That is not the way in which we express our opinion. What we say is this—that the grievances of Ireland, the evil condition of Ireland, and the maladies of Ireland, are of such a nature that you cannot remedy them without going deep down into their causes; and that if you attempt and pretend to deal with them merely by suppression and repression, you are certain to fail. The theory is, I believe, that the National League is the cause of all the mischief, and the Government say that they want to suppress the National League. They regard it as a body of men — I suppose as a small body of men—paid from abroad, who debauch and tyrannize over the people, and they want to put it down in order to free the country from this debauching and tyrannizing influence. Well, to our minds that is not only an incorrect view to take, but it is an absolute inversion of the truth. The National League could not have the power which it exercises if it did not spring from the people, and did not represent their wants, wishes, and desires. In the mind of the Government the Irish people are always wrong. This is common with despotic Governments. They are always going to free the people from the leaders who have debauched them. If you want to know the opinions of the Irish people, free from terrorism, appeal to the Irish Representatives. [*Laughter.*] Yes; these Gentlemen are the freely chosen Representatives of the Irish people. Who can say that that is not the case, and who can say that they were not chosen in a vast number of cases without any attempt to oppose their election, and that where they were opposed they were not elected by overwhelming majorities? The Chief Secretary has said that the great need of Ireland is a stable system of law. I thought that was a very happy expression; I absolutely agree with that proposition, which could not be more happily or correctly stated; but a Coercion Bill is not a stable system of law. It is something which cannot have eternal life conferred upon it. You can only attain to a stable system of law by making conquest of the minds and hearts of the people themselves, and to do that you must make them feel that they themselves are the very source of the law which is around them on every side. You must make it their desire, as well as their duty, to maintain and enforce the law, if you wish to succeed. You are, therefore, bound to turn to remedial measures, which will bring the people of Ireland into harmony with the law, and in favour of its support and maintenance. Can anyone deny that these coercion expedients have always failed? The whole history of Ireland shows that they have. We have heard about successful Coercion Bills; but their success has only been for a short time. Can any politician look back upon the 87 years of the Union and say that coercive legislation has been a success? Has it quenched the ardour of the Irish people for self-government? Has it satisfied them with our rule? If not, what chance is there that the present coercive policy will succeed now that all the conditions are more unfavourable than they ever were before? Our past policy has invariably failed to subdue the Irish people. It has always been as fuel to the flame of their unquenchable patriotism. The history and the literature of Ireland are full of the records and evidences of that inextinguishable spirit. It grew whilst the people despaired; and I want to ask this House how can they dream that they will succeed in this policy of theirs when the Irish people feel that they are assured of a certain, and not very distant, success? In the past we starved the Irish people; we crushed them by penal laws; we decimated them by famine, aud drove them to emigrate across the Atlantic. ["Oh, oh!"] Do hon. Gentlemen question that that is the history of Ireland? [*Laughter.*] That is not easy to understand. It is not always easy to interpret a laugh. It is not articulate. But I have always understood that, in the early history of Ireland, we did all we could in this country to cramp her trade, to destroy her manufactures and her demand for labour, and that we succeeded in our endeavours. I have always understood that it was the policy of this country and of landlordism in this House which brought famine on the Irish people, which was followed by emigration; and now England is confronted by a Nemesis, because this emigrated population has multiplied in numbers, in wealth, in power, and courage. You have created another and greater Ireland in the West, the sister and ally of the Ireland at home. The Nationalist Party of Ireland is represented in this House by 85 out of 103 Members, and I want to put a practical question to Her Majesty's Government. What will you do with these 85

Nationalist Members? I defy you to carry out the drastic provisions of this Bill, if it becomes an Act, and to retain these Gentlemen here. It is, as the Marquess of Salisbury himself declared, absolutely inconsistent to impose a Coercion Bill like this on the Irish people, and to grant them the free, full, and equal representation which at present they enjoy in this House. The Liberal Party have been taunted with their alliance with the Irish people and the Irish Nationalist Party. I, for one, am proud of that alliance. I am proud of an alliance which we have taken up with those who represent the great mass of the Irish people, who claim that right of self-government which the English people have attained and maintained for themselves. We are told sometimes that our action is a mere Party move; we are told sometimes that we are but the blind followers of one man; and we know who is pointed at when that is said. Well, Sir, I think that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), in the pages of history, will not stand so high in any part of his life as he will in regard to the action he has taken in connection with Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman is entitled to the double credit and honour of being, on the one hand, the first to see that the time was ripe for the conferring of this right on the Irish people; and, on the other hand, of being incomparably above any other man, in ability and willingness, to force this question to the front. He saw these things; but it does not follow that we did not see them too. It seems to be assumed that we had no faculty of perception, or, I suppose, of thought. I maintain that we have shown our faculty of perception and of thought by the attitude we have taken up—we have shown that we have become convinced of the rectitude of the proposals of my right hon. Friend and of the demands of the Irish people. We have shown that we are convinced that there is no other method by which we can rule Ireland in harmony with the union and the welfare of the United Kingdom, except that which we propose; and there is no chance of our varying that opinion, or of our deserting that object or alliance. This, I hold, will be a people's question. No majority in this House can settle it without a fresh appeal to the country. When the time comes for that fresh appeal to be made, it is our conviction that the people will not back a policy of coercion, and that the alternative will be the concession of Home Rule to the Irish people. We are perfectly confident in our own minds that that appeal will result as I have said. We will abide by this opinion, and by this policy, and by this alliance, even if we unhappily lose the enormous services and help of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian before our object is accomplished. We believe that when this appeal is made it will result in the repeal of the present Bill, if it is passed into an Act. Having regard, not only to the contents of the Bill, but to the circumstances of the time, we hold this to be one of the worst Coercion Bills ever presented to Parliament; and we believe that if it is passed into law it will before long be repealed, and will result in the conferring upon the Irish people of that right of self-government which is the only basis and the only hope of Constitutional freedom and of a system of stable government.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Lord Henry Bruce*,)—put, and *agreed to*.

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

GLEBE LANDS OCCUPATION (ENGLAND) BILL.—[Bill 162.]

(*Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Childers, Mr. John Talbot, Mr. Tomlinson.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Baggallay.*)

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): What is the object of this Bill?

Mr. BAGGALLAY (Lambeth, Brixton): The object of the measure is to give incumbents occupying their own glebe lands the same opportunities of obtaining compensation for improvements which are now given to occupiers under the Agricultural Holdings Act. The provisions of the Bill are short and simple, and I do not think they will meet with practical opposition in the House. I am not desirous of going into detail on the measure. Now, as I do not intend to take the Committee stage for a fortnight, I may say that the only object is to enable incumbents who have to farm their own lands to obtain compensation for small unimportant improvements and for growing crops, which they do not now obtain on resignation, and which their representatives do not obtain in the event of their death. I, therefore, trust the House will accede to the second reading.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: My knowledge of this subject is very limited; therefore, my words will be few. I desire to move the adjournment of the debate. I candidly admit that I do not see any objection to the principle of the measure; but I think I am quite in the recollection of the House when I say that it was understood before the adjournment for Easter that no Business would be done to-night after the adjournment of the debate on the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill. There is an introductory Memorandum to the Bill which seems to contain matter which will be more or less new to hon. Members. The measure is one of considerable volume. It contains 20 clauses; and if I am right in my recollection on other occasions many Members have remained here to watch it. My principal object in moving the adjournment is to give these hon. Members an opportunity of being present when the Bill comes on. I think it would only be chivalrous of the hon. and learned Gentleman in charge of the Bill to give these hon. Gentlemen an opportunity of taking part in the discussion on the Motion for the Second Reading. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): I second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Edward Harrington,*)—put, and *negatived.*

Original Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* 26th April.

CHRISTCHURCH (SOUTHAMPTON) CHARTER (CORRECTION OF ERROR) BILL [*Lords*].—[BILL 209.]

(*Sir William Hart Dyke.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): I hope the House will agree to the second reading of this very short Bill. It is a Bill for the purpose of correcting an error which crept into the Charter of Incorporation granted to the borough of Christchurch in June of last year. An error was, by inadvertence, made in the description of the boundaries of the borough, set forth in the first schedule of the charter. In order to avoid any difficulty, it has been found necessary to correct the error by a Bill. The Bill has already passed the other House of Parliament.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir William Hart Dyke.*)

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Can the right hon. Gentleman assign any reason why Bournemouth should have been refused the charter which, I understand, its inhabitants have recently asked for?

SIR WILLIAM HART DYKE: I do not know what application Bournemouth may have made with respect to this Bill; but the charter was granted to the borough of Christchurch last year.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Tuesday* next.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 13th March, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Lunacy Acts Amendment * [221].

Second Reading — Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [*Fourth Night*], *debate further adjourned;* Solicitors' Annual Certificate Duty * [125], *debate adjourned;* Coal Mines, &c., Regulation * [130].

Select Committee—Bankruptcy Offices (Sites) * [197]; Mr. Allison, Mr. Quinn, and Mr. Plunket *added.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FOURTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to

Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

LORD HENRY BRUCE (Wilts, Chippenham) said, he would not have ventured to take up the time of the House if the Conservative Members had not been accused of a conspiracy of silence; but in fact there had been no conspiracy regarding this measure. The reason why more Members on the Ministerial side of the House had not taken part in the debate was because they felt that the subject had been completely threshed out not only in the House, but in the country as well. For the introduction of the Bill the Government were not at all to blame. It was their bounden duty to maintain law and order in Ireland, and it could not be allowed that certain self-constituted rulers in Ireland should have the control of that country. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) wished the House to believe that the agitation in Ireland was a Constitutional movement. He (Lord Henry Bruce), on the contrary, maintained that the policy which those men had marked out for themselves was due to the course adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, whose policy for many years had been one of extremes. At one moment he said he was glad that he had an opponent like the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) to honour, and in a few hours he cast the hon. Member into gaol. Now, as regarded the Amendment before the House of the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxfordshire (Sir Bernhard Samuelson), it was well spread to catch the unwary. It showed that there was much anxiety to maintain the Union, but no Party than that to which the hon. Baronet belonged had done more to smash it up. The blame for the present condition of Ireland which made this Bill necessary rested with those who had created such a state of things there, and he accused the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian of being primarily responsible for it. That right hon. Gentleman had not only deceived his Party, but also his country. No one would venture to attack the right hon. Gentleman if he did not feel it to be his duty to do so. They well knew and admired his oratorical genius. Few men had ever stood within the four walls of that House who had displayed such an amount of rhetorical power; and besides it could not be forgotten that he had a great advantage over other hon. Members in that he was "an old Parliamentary hand." But they could not refrain from condemning his lack of statesmanship, and assuredly there was a missing link between the word Orator and the word Statesman. He maintained that every one of the right hon. Gentleman's measures for Ireland had failed; and not only so, but they had increased the disorder in Ireland. He had been the most cruel executioner Ireland ever had. In his opinion, what was wanted in Ireland was the putting down of the foot on absentee landlords and rack-renting landlords. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman would succeed in destroying the Union and in endangering the Empire. If he did succeed he (Lord Henry Bruce) would not envy the shattered reputation which the right hon. Gentleman would leave behind him. The Cowper Commission's Report showed that the people were far more afraid of Boycotting, which depended for its success on the probability of outrage, than they were of the judgments of the Courts of Justice, and that the unwritten law of the National League and its self-constituted tribunals were in some districts supreme. Those self-constituted tribunals were, in fact, nothing more nor less than Star Chambers, having at their head the local Scroggs and the local Jeffreys. The House was bound to pass a stringent measure to meet the existing state of things in Ireland. In 1866 there were close upon 900 cases of serious crime in which the offenders were neither convicted nor made amenable. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) had said that the vast majority of the Irish Roman Catholic priesthood were on the side of the National League. But they were originally against it, and they had only joined it because they were obliged to do so. What liberty could there be in Ireland while a peasant's cottage was either his garrison or his tomb? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had formerly shown how crime had with fatal precision dogged the footsteps of the Land League; and what the right hon. Gentleman had said then was perfectly true now. The issue now before the House was a very grave one, which should be met with inflexible firmness and resolution. The Unionist Party, he believed, had made up their minds to one thing—namely, that they would put Ireland in a state of law and order; and when they had done that they would have the satisfaction of knowing that they had stamped out one of the most detestable conspiracies which had ever stained the annals of any country.

Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston) said, that while congratulating the noble Lord opposite (Lord Henry Bruce) upon the admirable canon of modesty with which he began his speech, he was sorry the noble Lord had not taken to heart that lesson of modesty which should have restrained a new Member from making a violent attack upon the policy of the most respected and one of the oldest Members of the House. He (Sir Walter Foster) could not claim the indulgence of the House as a new Member; but he ventured to do so as one who had very recently passed through the ordeal of a contested election—a contest significant in its results, as it turned upon this question of coercion for Ireland, or as for the benefit of the electors, it was covered up in the sugar-candied euphemism—the maintenance of law and order. The electors of the Ilkeston Division were stirred as they had never been stirred before, and there was the heaviest gross poll ever known, with the result that the majority by which his Predecessor in the representation of the Division (Mr. Thomas Watson)—a Member of the House universally respected and lamented—was elected was increased by 500 votes. This result was a clear expression of the opinion of the industrial classes on the question of coercion, and it entirely agreed with his (Sir Walter Foster's) experience of other parts of the country. The mass of the industrial population were everywhere opposed to the repressive legislation which her Majesty's Government propose, and were anxious that a milder and better method of treatment should be tried with the Irish people. In his own constituency every every effort was made, not only by the legitimate followers of Her Majesty's Government, but by those Liberals who, sitting on one side of the House, voted with the other side. Gentlemen of this last nondescript class did their best to inoculate the constituency with that dry rot that had affected their Leaders; but they failed, and he did not believe the minority contained 200 Liberal Unionist votes. The dry rot which was said to have affected the Liberal Party had not extended to the rank and file. A friend of his who had visited a church in the Eastern Counties had remarked to the verger, who showed him over the place, on the dry rot which was beginning to appear in the oak carvings of some of the pews. "Yes," said the verger, "there is dry rot in the pews, but it is nothing to the dry rot in the pulpit." He (Sir Walter Foster) believed that the dry rot in the Liberal Party was similarly distributed, there being a good deal in the House of Commons, and very little among the industrial classes, who had made up their minds against a policy of coercion. With respect to the Bill, he had attentively listened to the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland with growing wonder that his artistic sense had not revolted at the disproportion between the stringent measure he had proposed and the flimsy basis on which it rested. He had discarded statistics, and had resorted to anonymous anecdotes as a substitute. His wonder grew when the stringency of the provisions of the Bill was displayed, so altogether out of proportion were they to the case for coercion. An attempt was made on Tuesday by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department to shore up the case with statistics of crime. That right hon. and learned Gentleman gave the House some figures in reference to the quarter just closed, and drew the somewhat disingenuous inference that outrages had increased in the last quarter by 83 per cent. That was a comparison of the figures for the March quarter with the figures of the December quarter. But he (Sir Walter Foster) invited the House to look at the figures for the previous year. The right hon. and learned Gentleman must have forgotten that in the previous quarter they had gone down more. In the March quarter last year, the number of outrages was 256; for the June quarter, 297; for the September quarter, 306; and for the December quarter, when the Plan of Campaign had been in operation, 166. The number of outrages in the March quarter of the present year was 241, or less than in any of the first three quarters of last year, when, by the admission of the Government, there was no case and no necessity for the application of coercive measures. The right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. A. J. Balfour) figures did not even now make out a case on the ground of criminal statistics for the introduction of this measure. He had, however, brought forward the difficulty of obtaining convictions, in consequence of the unwillingness of the people to give evidence in these cases; and that was a condition of things explicable, to a certain extent, by the character of the police being rather that of a military than of a civil force, and also by the fact that there was no efficient detective service in the Irish Constabulary. Secondly, a large number of cases in which evidence was not forthcoming arose from time to time in Ireland out of faction fights, a form of diversion not appreciated in this country, but which he, as a schoolboy in Ireland, remembered as the ordinary amusement for a half-holiday. In regard to these faction fights, it was part of the code of honour of every Irishman, that if he received a blow on the head or a wound of any kind, he refused to give information to the police. There was, however, a deeper and graver reason for this failure of evidence—namely, the hatred that existed in the breasts of the Irish people to an alien law and an alien Government. Let them condemn and deplore this as they might, it existed—a hatred of a law administered by alien officials, under an irresponsible system like that of Dublin Castle. The fact that, in spite of Coercion Bills, this hatred had deepened and widened during 86 years, should teach them the lesson that it was time to turn to some other method less dangerous to the welfare of the two islands, and less destructive to the administration of justice. Then, the Chief Secretary for Ireland relied much upon Boycotting as showing a necessity for the Bill, a practice with regard to which he sincerely wished that it were possible to put it down by law. But they had the views of Lord Salisbury, in his famous Newport speech, that the law could not touch Boycotting, and his (Sir Walter Foster's) experience of Ireland confirmed that view; but he regretted to say that there was Boycotting in England to as great an extent as in Ireland. Now, he (Sir Walter Foster) had had personal experience of Boycotting in this country; although he held particular opinions as to Home Rule long before the Bill for the better government of Ireland was brought in. In the case of the Ilkeston election, there was one of the worst cases of Boycotting he had come across. During that contest, he had the good fortune to have the assistance of a young Irish doctor, whose influence and pen were very valuable, and who wrote letters to the local newspapers in his behalf. On the morning after the declaration of the poll his principal, who was a knight, forsooth, of the Primrose League, called him into the surgery and gave him notice to leave his service, saying that he did not approve of his political action and of his letters. ["Oh, oh!"] Why, surely that was as gross and disgraceful a case of Boycotting and intimidation as any he had heard of in Ireland. The case of the Chief Secretary for Ireland as to intimidation rested upon a total of 836 cases over the whole of Ireland. In the previous year, when the Government did not think it necessary to propose any repressive measures, there had been 879 cases of intimidation. He had received a letter from a friend, in whom he had every confidence, who stated that he knew and could give the names and full details of cases in 80 parishes in a single Division of a midland county (not Derbyshire) in which the labourers were intimidated by the farmers, acting under the influence of the parsons and the squires. The labourers in one district were forbidden to deal with a certain local shopkeeper, who was a Radical. In another village, his informant delivered a lecture on politics; but when he proposed to go back, the labourers in an adjoining village were informed that if they came to hear him, they must take the consequences. A Radical bricklayer, who lived in one village, was obliged to get employment in another, because no builder dared to employ him. That the man was personally respected by his neighbours was shown by the fact that he had been elected a member of the local School Board. There were cases in which intimidation was carried so far that prosecutions might be founded; but there was difficulty in obtaining evidence, because the victims of intimidation were terror-stricken. His informant further wrote—

> "What is going to take place is the formation of secret societies. If a London Socialist would only come down to-morrow, he would catch all the labourers here."

He had also a letter from a Nonconformist minister, in reply to a request that representatives might be sent to a political conference, in which he said—

> "I think this village will have to be unrepresented in the Liberal Association. All the employers here are rabid Tories, and the labourers inclined to Liberalism dare not avow themselves as Liberals. We are compelled to be quiet. I am sorry, but it is true."

In that one Division, allowing some 10 cases of Boycotting in every village, there were as many cases as in all Ireland. He contended, in view of these statements, that if the Boycotting Clauses of the Bill were good for Ireland, they were equally needed for England. There was one right hon. Gentleman who might be congratulated on the Bill (Mr. W. H. Smith), for it was the carrying out of the policy he arrived at after a few days' occupation of the post of Chief Secretary for Ireland—namely, the suppression of the National League. In the debate upon the first announcement of that policy, the Government were compared to an empty sack which could not be made to stand up. The Government sack was empty still, for it contained only the same policy, but it did stand up; and why? At one corner stood the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) holding it up; and at the opposite corner stood the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) holding it up; while the hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine) and the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham (Mr. Jesse Collings) pulled out the sides in order that the sack might look full. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), who said he did not regard the Bill as a remedy. No; it was not a remedy. It was a poison; and by the law of nature that like begets like, he would predict that the result of an Act like this would be cruelty, oppression, secret conspiracies, and disaffection, replacing the National League by a state of terrorism such as existed when the Ribbon Lodges held their secret meetings. It was said that Ireland was now living under a system of terrorism. Well, as a young man brought up in Ireland, he had a vivid recollection of the reign of the Ribbon Societies; and he could tell the House that the present terrorism of which they heard so much was healthy as compared with the terrorism which prevailed when, under severe coercion laws, the Ribbon Societies were in force. He implored the House not to pass a Bill which would engender new hatred of England and of English law in the breasts of the new generation of Irishmen, and would envenom the hatred which was felt for our country in the greater Ireland on the other side of the ocean. It was bad statesmanship and bad policy to engender hatred amongst these people, who were already sufficiently irritated against us. The right hon. Gentleman who had introduced the Bill had framed it in a way which would have that effect, and for that and other reasons, he (Sir Walter Foster) could not help saying that there was an unhappy ingenuity about the Bill. That unhappy ingenuity was shown in the fact that it touched the Irish people in their tenderest point—their national sentiment—while it recalled the bitter memories connected with the Whiteboy Acts. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had denied that, in the opinion of the Government, force was the only remedy; but he said that, in their view, it was necessary to the success of any remedial legislation that the administration of justice should once more be made effectual. Well, he (Sir Walter Foster) agreed that the administration of justice was an important element in the government of the country; but, for all that, he did not the less maintain that the policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government was not likely to be successful. The remedy, according to their plan, was to be given after the poison. The opium was to be given to deaden the patient, and then, but not till then, the remedy was to be administered. Well, but it might happen in politics as it did in physiology, that the effects of the opiate would counteract the remedy when it was subsequently given. He (Sir Walter Foster) must confess that he had never expected that the measures of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), admirable as they were, would have the effect of crushing out the discontent which prevailed in Ireland. He expected that they would no doubt do a certain and even a considerable amount of good; but, at the same time, he could not help feeling that they did not touch the root of the evil in that country. Now, although it must be admitted that remedial legislation for Ireland was in itself a good and praiseworthy thing, and was calculated to operate beneficially so far as it went, yet it was none the less true that, until it touched the secret cause of all this trouble, it would not and could not have any potent effect on the Irish people. In other words, it would not have any potent effect unless it appealed to and touched their national feeling. They, in England, had, he (Sir Walter Foster) ventured to say, no idea—or at all events no adequate idea—of the intensity of national feeling amongst the Irish. He, himself, professed to know a little about it, because he grew up as a boy amongst Irish boys, and thus learned to know the feelings and the aspirations of the rising generation; and with that knowledge, he had no hesitation in saying that the national feeling of an Irishman was a strong passion deeply planted in his heart. Now, that passion was profoundly insulted by this Bill; and the result of that would be, that any remedial measure by which the Bill might be accompanied would have no effect in reducing the discontent of the country, even although it should reduce the sufferings of the poorer classes. It was for the same reason, because they did not touch the national sentiment of the people, that the remedial measures of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had failed to give content and happiness to Ireland; and, if that were so, then it was certainly too late now to try remedial and coercive measures together, for a new generation had grown up more than ever inspired with the idea of self-government. Well, Englishmen were wise enough to believe in self-government for themselves. Why, then, should they not believe in the same principle when applied to the Irish race? He saw no reason. But, by the Bill, they were rejecting the opportunity of meeting the demand on the part of Ireland, and were, at the same time, inflaming that sentiment of patriotism which lived in the breast of every Irishman, at a time when it might have been satisfied by the concession of self-government. For these reasons, he wished that he had many votes in that House. If he had, he should give them all unhesitatingly against this Bill. As, however, he had but one vote, he should give that vote against it, not only on the grounds he had already stated, but because it involved a repudiation of the great principle of Parliamentary representative government. There was a large number of Members sent to the House to represent the people of Ireland. Were they going to pass that Bill against the votes of five out of six of those Irish Members? That was certainly not compatible with the principle of Parliamentary government. If they did so, the Chief Secretary for Ireland should go to the full extent of his position, and carry out his principles to their full logical consequences, and should prepare to take away the representation of Ireland, which was useless if the Irish were always to be out-voted by English Members. He protested against the Bill before them, because it was proposed, and was sought to be passed, in opposition to the views, and in spite of the votes, of the great majority of Irish Members; and because it would tend to introduce a system of government false in principle, iniquitous in action, and fraught with shame and dishonour to this country of England, of which he had the honour to be a Representative. He asked the House to pause in a course which was neither sound nor scientific, because it did not remove an evil, but left it to work underground, with the certainty that it would, at some future time, burst out with disastrous effect.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I intervene in this debate somewhat reluctantly, as I feel that nothing new can be said; that no fresh light can be thrown upon the subject, and that every Member has by this time practically made up his mind how to give his vote. One reason for my intervention is, that it is well that the views of Her Majesty's Government should be from day to day stated during the debate—partly because there may be hon. Members in the House who have not heard the earlier stages of the debate; partly that the country might know whether any change had been made in the views of Her Majesty's Government, and, if so, in what direction. I can state on behalf of Her Majesty's Government that there is no change, no shade of difference in the opinions now held by them to those stated at the beginning of the debate, upon which this Bill is founded. Indeed, the observation I would make upon this point is one which I have heard frequently made of late, that strong as was the case for the Government put forward in the powerful and able speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, it has been strengthened as the debate has gone on by further facts and figures since looked up, and adduced to meet special points raised by the opponents to the Bill. The position of Her Majesty's Government is very clear, and has been very clearly stated more than once, whether it is right or wrong. It is a position which was ably defended in 1881 by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and his then Colleagues. We hold—as was then held—that the primary duty of a Government is to maintain the law and see that it is carried out—to secure obedience to it, and to check open or secret defiance of it; to protect those who are willing to abide by it, and to punish those who not only set themselves against it, but incite others to act in the same direction. And we hold that the secondary, but hardly less important duty of a Government is to remedy any defects in the law, and to remove, as far as possible, any just causes of complaint and any grievances. I cannot agree with the novel principle lately evolved out of the somewhat elastic inner consciousness of the right hon. Member for Derby, which he propounded some nights ago, that remedial measures must precede the enforcement of the law. He did not contend for this when he was Secretary of State for the Home Department, and in a responsible position. I appeal, then, from Philip drunk to Philip sober; from Philip out of Office to Philip in Office; or I may appeal from him to his Leader who held an exactly opposite doctrine in 1881—

> "There are some who say that the Government has made a great mistake in giving the first place in the deliberations of Parliament—at least the first place in the proposals laid before Parliament—to a subject of this kind, and that they ought to have commenced by an attempt to deal with the intricate portion of a Land Bill. Well, it is impossible for us to accept any proposal of that kind."—(3 *Hansard*.)

I agree that remedial measures should, as far as possible, be concurrently introduced with the more stringent measure to check defiance of the law. This course Her Majesty's Government have adopted. One consideration has had great weight with us. The right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley), on March 22, said that—

> "The Government are going to work in an inverted order; they are beginning with a policy which will aggravate the existing evil, and will weaken and spoil the operation of whatever future remedies they may be able to propose."

We have arrived at exactly the opposite conclusion. We are satisfied that remedial measures, however well framed and devised, would if they did not fail altogether, yet be seriously crippled and hampered unless free liberty of legitimate action is, concurrently or precedently, secured to individuals of all classes and conditions. Unless they are relieved from the fear and terrorism which now prevail, and prevent them from performing contracts which they would otherwise be ready to perform; from buying or selling except as ordered by the National League; from working where they please and for whom they please, remedial measures would be of little avail to them. It was in a great degree owing to this kind of coercion that the effect of the Land Act of 1881 was lost — coercion, I may observe, in the true sense of the word; for to put down crime, and to uphold the supremacy of the law of the land over the unwritten law of the League is not coercion—to provide for due administration of justice is not coercion; but to prevent persons from doing what they have a legal right to do, and what they desire to do, is coercion in the true sense of the word. I have spoken of the opponents to this measure. I should like, with the leave of the House, to consider for a few minutes who are the opponents, and the character of the opposition. First, it is said that the country is opposed to this Bill. I deny that allegation, or that it has in any way been proved; certainly not by the case of the one election to which the hon. Member referred. I may remind him that although he got a larger majority in that election than was secured in 1886, it was much less than the majority in 1885. We have been told that much importance must be attached to the meetings such as that held on Easter Monday. But those who are in the habit of attending such meetings are not so ready to rate their importance so highly. A large part of the meeting is made up of persons who come to see, and not to hear. Another part of persons come to help in any disturbance, should there be any, and possibly in any looting; Socialists in action, though probably not Socialists from conviction. And of those who come to hear and protest, very few really hear anything. The whole thing is a foregone conclusion, and resolutions are passed "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." This is not the way to test the opinion of the country, and of the working classes. That opinion was fairly tested at the last Election, when the question was put squarely before them; and the Government will not fear, should it be necessary, again to test the opinion of the country. The only alternative remedy which has been put forward for governing Ireland — namely, the granting Home Rule, was put before them and negatived conclusively. It is true that this actual Bill was not before them for the same reason that in the play the Spanish Armada could not be seen because it was not yet in sight; but Her Majesty's Government had announced in January, 1886, that they felt it their duty to suppress the National League, and that they would have recourse, if necessary, to stringent repressive measures, so that that line of action, or the only alternative remedy, Home Rule, was distinctly before the country in the autumn of 1886, and the country decided against Home Rule. So much, then, for the supposed opposition by the country to the policy of Her Majesty's Government. I need hardly ask why the National League oppose the Bill. They know that it will, if it become law, strike a deadly blow to their power, if not to their very existence; for they know how readily the Land League was disposed of under former legislation. They know also that the Act of 1882 was not a failure, as it is too often the habit to allege, but most beneficial in preserving order. The figures quoted by the Home Secretary yesterday were conclusive on this point, and I shall be surprised if they can be challenged or refuted by Irish Members. But why do the Members, right hon. and hon. on the Opposition Benches—or part of them, I should say —oppose. They who have brought forward or supported two stringent Coercion Acts, far more stringent than the proposed measure, since 1880; they who, in 1885, were still supporting the Act of 1882, and who, early in 1885, were proposing to renew some of its provisions for another term of years. Why do they oppose who taunted the Conservatives, in 1885, for not having renewed the Act of 1882. In passing, let me say that the action of the Conservative Party on that occasion has been much misrepresented or misunderstood. It was referred to by the right hon. Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) last night; and I am, therefore, justified in stating my view on this point, and I believe and am sure that in so doing I express the views of many who sit behind me. Many of us believed that the Act of 1882 had worked so well that it might be possible to let it drop, and rely for keeping peace and order and freedom of action by the exertion of the Common Law without any extraordinary powers. We certainly hoped that this might be so, and we were desirous to test our belief. But while advocating the non-renewal of the Crimes Act, I, for one, did not hesitate to say that, should the experiment fail, we should be obliged to have recourse again to some measure for the prevention of crime. This is what I believe most of the Conservative candidates said. They added, and so did I, that we should be ready to extend the law to Great Britain; and so far as my personal, individual opinion is concerned, I should be quite ready to do so now, as regards the majority of the clauses of this Bill. Our trial failed, our beliefs and hopes have also failed, though we are not ashamed of having made the trial, and we are, therefore, consistently with what we then said, now found supporting a Crimes Prevention Bill. But if our action is held to be inconsistent with Election Addresses, which I deny, the reproach does not come well from the Liberal Separatists. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian went to the country in 1885, praying that he might be returned with a large majority, so as to enable him to resist the demand of the hon. Member for Cork and his Party. He was then, as he stated, anxious that the Irish Party should not hold the balance of power and be in a position to offer bribes which might tempt Liberals, and certainly would tempt Tories, to betray the Empire. Yet now he has surrendered to the hon. Member for Cork, and has marched into his camp with flying colours, followed by many though, happily, not with the whole of his formerly devoted followers. And who hold now the balance of power and prevent the betrayal of the Empire? Those courageous and loyal men who, in spite of every inducement to the contrary, declined to betray the Empire, and to surrender as he has done. To come back to the question, why do right hon. Gentlemen oppose a measure less stringent than that upheld by them in 1885? Because the shibboleth of Home Rule has been since proclaimed by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian; and because he, the author of that scheme, and the speedy converts who had never dreamt of this plan till he had announced it, know that the passing of this Bill will put an end to that anarchical state of things in Ireland—to that unpunished opposition and defiance of the law upon which the argument for Home Rule is based. They contend that Ireland cannot be governed under the present system, and they point to existing disorganization and give their panacea, their patent medicine, Home Rule. But if Ireland quiets down under this milder law, as it did under the more stringent law of 1882, the ground will be cut from under their feet; if the disease is cured there will be no call for their patent medicine. The object of the Home Rulers is to convince the people of this country that Ireland is ungovernable, except with a separate Parliament and separate Executive; and one main use of this Bill is to convince them to the contrary. How has the case been made out for the Bill? It is hopeless to expect to influence those who consider that unless murders and gross outrages are shown to be rife, no repressive measures should be adopted or can be justified, and that no attempt should be made to enforce the law. But for men not of extreme but of moderate views, surely enough has been shown to justify such a measure as the present. It is not necessary for such justification to rely upon cases of gross outrage and murder; though I may observe, in passing, that in certain parts of the country there are plenty—too many—of these moonlight outrages, and acts of brutal cruelty to men and unoffending animals, which fill us with horror. We prefer to rely on the general state of things in certain districts which loudly calls for a remedy. This state of things has been pointed out by the Judges in carefully considered charges. I can understand that the Members from Ireland below the Gangway should sneer and mock at these charges. Of all men the Judges are the most obnoxious to them. They can intimidate juries, and Boycott them; but they have as yet failed to do this with the Judges; they have failed to deter the Judges from the performance of their duties, and they view them, therefore, with bitter hatred and fear. Indeed, with regard to the change of venue to England, I believe that in their inmost hearts they prefer the trial by a British jury in London to the sole alternative, as was pointed out by the Home Secretary last night, of a Special Commission of Judges, as provided by the Act of 1882. Indeed, I have discovered a want of enthusiasm and want of accord on their part with any Member who is denouncing this special clause. The hon. Member for Brigg Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Waddy) preached at some length upon this; but, as is the case with other sermons, the Irish Members of Parliament slumbered and slept. But though I was not surprised at the attacks made by the Members from Ireon the Judges, I confess I was surprised to hear the right hon. Member for Mid

Lothian throw discredit on these charges. He must, indeed, have been hard pushed to minimize the effect which he felt they must produce on the House and the country, when he treated them as extra judicial utterances, and as of no weight because not given in relation to a particular case or state of facts. Even on this ground he was in a false position, as the charges were based, and were so stated to have been based, upon official Returns upon the state of each county, which it was the duty of the Judges officially to bring under the notice of the Grand Jury. They were, therefore, well-considered utterances grounded on official information; and you cannot get rid of the gravity of these charges except by impugning the character of the Judges, or their common sense. The charges of the Judges are very strong. I will not weary the House by reading through them again. I will only remind it that in County Clare, Mr. Justice O'Brien said that—

> "Law to a great extent has ceased to exist, and is replaced by an influence fatal to industry, fatal to prosperity, fatal to the welfare of the community."

That in County Mayo, Mr. Justice Lawson stated that—

> "The present state of things, according to the reports made to him, approached as near to rebellion against authority as anything short of civil war could be."

That in County Cork, Mr. Justice Johnson pointed out that out of 26 cases of midnight visits by armed parties, in only two have the parties been made amenable. And that in County Galway, Mr. Justice Murphy said the reports showed "a complete paralysis of the law." Take another mode of terrorism—Boycotting. Upon this point the evidence before the Cowper Commission, and the conclusion arrived at by the Commission and stated in their Report, must suffice to satisfy any reasonable man. No wonder the right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley), in his speech against Urgency of March 22nd, did not read out this part of the Report. An hon. Member, when the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant was speaking the other evening, interrupted him and denied the existence of any case when a person had been Boycotted for not joining the League. I am not sure whether any case of Boycotting on that ground has been mentioned in the debate, but it would be difficult to believe, looking to the power and past action of the League, that they did not give effect to their threats to Boycott those who did not join. I will refer to only two cases which seem to support that view. They are selected from many, all taken from local newspapers. I am quoting from a pamphlet headed "Ireland in 1887;" but the extracts are all taken from local papers. *The Munster Express* of January, 1887, contains the statement made at a meeting of a branch of the League that every man who stood aloof and did not assist the National League was an enemy of the association, and these words were added—"Go, mark him well." In another paper it was said by the chairman at another branch meeting that the man who stood aloof was an enemy, and the people would know how to deal with him when the ranks were closed. I believe the country and the House will be satisfied that the Government have established a strong case for legislation of this kind, however painful and disagreeable it may be to have to introduce it; and I may observe that the late Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell), in his powerful and well-reasoned speech, fully and frankly admitted the large number of undetected crimes; the terrorism exerted over juries; the wide prevalence of Boycotting; and the illegality, though not the immorality, of the Plan of Campaign, though he strenuously opposed our proposed remedy. The right hon. Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) raised three objections to the Bill. First, that it was against the wishes of five-sixths of the Irish Representatives. This is to be regretted, but it should not deter us from doing what we believe to be our duty, and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that a very large proportion of the five-sixths—if not the whole of them—belong to that very League to whose work we attribute so much of the existing disorganization. Secondly, he said that the state of crime in Ireland did not justify the Bill. He did not enlarge upon this, and I believe that what I have said, but much more what has been said by former speakers, is an answer to this objection. And, thirdly, he objected that it was made permanent. To this the short answer is that it is impossible to say how long it will be before the object of securing peace and order and freedom of action to all persons is attained; but it is quite certain the law ought to last till it has attained its object, and equally certain that it will be repealed when it has. And now a word or two upon the Bill itself. First, it has been said by the right hon. Member for Newcastle, and it has been repeated by others, that this Bill is simply a Bill for the landlords, in other words, a Bill to put the tenants in the hands of the landlords. To that charge we make an explicit and absolute denial. The Bill itself refutes the charge, for there is not one line or clause in it that can be shown to have that aim. No answer has been received to the challenge thrown down upon this point by the Attorney General for England in his able speech. In one sense only is it a measure that will help landlords—if the prevailing system of terrorism and intimidation is removed, if men are left free to act, it is true that many tenants who can pay their rent, and are ready to pay it, will be able to do so without being shot in the legs, or having their cattle maimed, or being deprived of the means of living. But in this sense of securing again freedom of action, the Bill is in the interests of tradesmen, enabling them to buy and sell from whom and to whom they please; it is in the interest of tenants, enabling them to fulfil their contracts honestly, and take or graze upon farms and lands which are unlet or Boycotted. It is in the interest of labourers, enabling them to work for whom they please, and thus earn that livelihood which is now made difficult for them owing to the pressure of the League. A Bill to secure due administration of law and justice in Ireland may benefit landlords, but it will benefit far more the whole people of Ireland of whatever class, business, or occupation, except those who trade on disaffection and disloyalty; and it will tend to restore confidence, without which no capital will flow into the country and no prosperity can be hoped for. As regards the provisions of the Bill, it is not now the proper time to discuss the clauses, which can be better dealt with in Committee; but let me refer to one or two general points, which have been touched upon in debate. I would first point out that the Summary Jurisdiction Clauses are, with two exceptions, substantially the same as those in the Act of 1882, with, however, the important limitation, not to be found in the earlier Act, that the exercise is limited to proclaimed districts, and does not extend to all Ireland. This clause was attacked by the right hon. Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) in most vehement language at Shipley; but he forgot to state to his hearers this fact, or to refer to the Bill of 1882 which he supported by his vote. One exception to which the right hon. Member for South Edinburgh referred to is that it includes "conspiracy;" and he pointed out the difficulty of defining conspiracy, and indignantly asked if such a question ought to be left to two magistrates who might know no law. But one magistrate must be a lawyer—Sub-section 6 of Section 11—that is, one must have a knowledge of law; and, further, there is an appeal from the Summary Court to a trained lawyer—Sub-section 7 of Section 11, which Sub-section, I may observe in passing, is especially framed so as to provide against the Chairman—a trained lawyer—being over-ruled by his colleagues at Quarter Sessions. The other exception is the Whiteboy Acts. But I desire to point out again that no new offence is created by this Bill. There is no revival of the Acts which have never ceased to be in operation, but only a more speedy procedure provided, should, unfortunately, offences be committed under them. And let me add, as will be seen by the Paper laid on the Table, that the offences are such as are now punishable in England. This was clearly stated by the Attorney General for Ireland in reply to questions put during his speech by the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart). In regard to the preliminary inquiry before Resident Magistrates, I may remark that this clause also follows the section of the Act of 1882; that it adopts the law of Scotland and other foreign countries; and that a similar provision was introduced into the proposed Code of Criminal Law for England. It has proved effective elsewhere, and also in Ireland when it was put in force; but this very effectiveness probably makes it distasteful to some of the opponents of the Bill. Complaint has been made that the Resident Magistrates are not lawyers; but I would point out that they have no judicial decisions to arrive at under this clause. Men of common sense can take evidence of witnesses, and judge whether they should be bound over to give evidence, and it is to be observed further, that the statements made by a witness are not to be used against him on any subsequent trial. Every question which the Resident Magistrate asks, and every answer, is taken down in writing, so that if the Magistrate puts improper questions, or has acted wrongly, he can at once be made responsible for it. We come then to change of venue. First, as to change of venue in Ireland. The right hon. Member for South Edinburgh laid great stress on the words, "more fair and impartial trial." Let us see what were the words in the Act of 1882. That Act allowed change of venue if the Attorney General believed it to be "more expedient in the interests of justice." I submit to the House that that expression is far more vague than the one used in this Bill; and certainly the object of Her Majesty's Government in making the change was to bind the Attorney General to something more definite. But let me remark, further, that whereas in 1882 the Attorney General's certificate was final, and could not be reviewed, an appeal lies from it by Clause 4 of this Bill. The Bill is, therefore, more carefully guarded than the Act to which the right hon. Member was a party. As to the change of venue to England, the right hon. Gentleman sought for precedents which he thought we must have looked up in self-defence. I am afraid I must make a full and frank admission that we did not think of Lord North, or Mr. Grenville, or Cromwell, or even James II. The ground for the clause which we rely on is stated in the Bill—namely, the necessity of relieving jurors from danger to their lives, property, and business. In other words, trial by jury has broken down from intimidation of jurors, and in the Act of 1882 intimidation is defined, and includes "words spoken or acts done to put any person in fear of any injury to or loss of his property, business, or means of living." And in reply to the right hon. Member's ridicule of the loss of business, I will refer him to one case taken from *The Kerry Evening Post* of January 29, referred to at page 75 of the pamphlet to which I have before referred, in which two Kerry buttermen were Boycotted. I would ask the House also to note how carefully the clause is limited to cases of a grave nature; that the certificate is to be signed by Attorney Generals of Ireland and England, and that the person charged shall have full powers of appeal against the change of venue. As was pointed out by the Home Secretary, there is no alternative for trial of such crimes as these but a Special Commission before Irish Judges. And I am much mistaken if Irish Representatives do not prefer an English jury to the Special Commission. I will make only one observation as to Section 15 and powers of the Lord Lieutenant to make rules upon which the right hon. Gentleman commented. The clause is quite rightly drawn, and gives the Lord Lieutenant only the necessary power to secure transmission of documents, prisoners, officers, and witnesses. It gives him no power to make rules as to the mode of trial in England. As to the proclamation of dangerous associations, surely an association is dangerous and should be put down if it is formed for purposes mentioned in Section 6 of the Bill, and the speedy decision of Parliament is secured as an effectual check upon the action of a Lord Lieutenant. I have to apologize to the House for the length of my speech. But I hope I have stated clearly the view of Her Majesty's Government and the position of affairs as it appears to them, which imperatively calls for legislation. We were anxious to rely on the Common Law and avoid special legislation, but we were defeated in our hopes by the work of the National League. The present disorganization of parts of the country, and the subversion of the law of the land by the unwritten decrees of the League, render it necessary to legislate in this direction if the Government is to fulfil the primary obligation of a Government. They could not accept, and the country would not accept, the sole alternative offered—namely, Home Rule. With a Criminal Procedure Bill, moderate compared to Liberal Acts of a like kind, Her Majesty's Government have introduced remedial measures to meet cases of eviction; and in an honest endeavour to settle the Land Question, which admittedly lies at the root of all the troubles, they propose to introduce a third Bill providing for purchase. By these Bills they mean to stand or fall.

They believe the country to be with them, but should the verdict go against them, they will cheerfully accept that verdict.

Mr. GULLY (Carlisle) said, that the view of his Party was that the measure was not only ill-timed and unnecessary, but in its details offensive and mischievous. He denied that the argument that the clauses of the Bill were similar to the provisions of previous Coercion Acts had any value. The Bill undoubtedly contained clauses for which no past Act supplied a precedent; but if every clause in it were an exact replica of a clause that had at one time or another been enacted the Bill would not be a whit more acceptable to those who sat on his side of the House. The issue involved in the present debate was one that must be decided ultimately by the country. It was whether the government of Ireland should for the future be based upon some measure of Home Rule, or whether it was to be carried on, as hitherto, by a recourse at frequent intervals to repressive legislation. That issue had not yet been placed before the country, as it must be before it could be finally decided. In arriving at a decision, the country would not pay much heed to the *tu quoque* arguments which had been so uselessly bandied to-and-fro in that House, and would not be swayed by the charges of inconsistency which each side of the House had levelled against the other, with the only result that much time had been wasted. To that ultimate appeal to the country he looked forward with the greatest confidence. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) in introducing the Bill had disregarded figures and statistics and based the Bill on other considerations. But the Home Secretary last night had rested his case on the number of crimes committed, and produced certain figures, not yet communicated to the House, which showed an increase—not a considerable increase—for the quarter ending March 31 last. If those figures were relied on, hon. Members from Ireland in particular, as well as other hon. Members of the House, ought to have an opportunity of dissecting them and ascertaining how many of them consisted of threatening letters, and how many of those graver crimes which the House had been told were on the decrease, and how many of Boycotting, intimidation, and those other offences with which Lord Salisbury had said that no measure of this kind could possibly cope. But those figures could not be the basis of a Bill which was prepared before they were known. The statistics on which the measure was framed must have been those for the quarter ending December 31, which showed a decrease of grave offences. What did the Government say in the Queen's Speech? Why they admitted that grave crimes had been rarer, but that the relations between owners and occupiers of land had been seriously disturbed by organized attempts to incite the latter class to combine against the payment of rents, and that the measures of the Government would be directed against this evil only. That speech contradicted in many important particulars some of the statements which had since been made. One of the most serious clauses of the Bill was that which gave power to bring prisoners to England to be tried. That clause was evidently directed to offences of the worst class only, which admittedly were diminishing in number. Then it was urged that there had been organized attempts to prevent the payment of rents to landlords. Was that not an admission of the right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne's (Mr. John Morley) contention that the Bill was intended to prevent combinations against unjust rents? It was conceded that the Plan of Campaign was not directed against the payment of any rent, but only of what its authors considered extortionate rents. The Commission itself admitted that excessive and impossible rents were prevalent in different parts of Ireland. These facts considered in connection with the passage in the Queen's Speech to which he had referred, justified the statement of the right hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne that the Bill was intended to be nothing more nor less than a measure framed in the interest of the landlords to prevent tenants combining against unjust rents admitted to be impossible rents. As to the section giving power to hold a preliminary inquiry before magistrates, there were good reasons why the introduction of that particular piece of Scotch law into English and Irish law was a very objectionable proceeding. One reason was that the conferring of such a power would cast upon magistrates duties which, to a certain extent, were the duties of policemen in England and in Ireland, thus depriving them of that confidence which attached to them in their judicial functions. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Roxburghshire (Mr. A. R. D. Elliot) seemed to think that it was a complete answer to objections urged against some of the clauses of the Bill, that they were already part of the law of Scotland. Scotch law, like Scotch oatmeal, was an excellent thing for Scotchmen and those who could thrive on it; but time and training would be necessary before English or Irish digestions could learn to assimilate it. The Scotch law, like that of the Continent, assigned to Judges and magistrates functions with which English and Irish Judges were wholly unfamiliar, and the life of any Government which attempted to add such provisions to the law of England would not be worth a week's purchase. In Scotland and on the Continent magistrates and Judges exercised inquisitorial functions, and it was especially dangerous to intrust such powers to the Irish Bench, in whom, unhappily, the people had but little confidence. As for the section relating to summary jurisdiction, he was surprised to hear the remark of the Attorney General for Ireland that it was a provision which might just as well be applied to England or to Scotland as to Ireland. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) had urged with respect to the Summary Jurisdiction Clauses that we were continually enlarging in this country the area of summary jurisdiction. But the right hon. and learned Gentleman ought to have remembered that this extension did not apply to any considerable extent to purely criminal matters — least of all to offences which had a political savour —but applied mainly to what were not so much *mala in se* as breaches of positive enactments, such as Local Government and School Board bye-laws. The greater number of the offences to be dealt with summarily under the Bill had a purely or partially political character, such as conspiracy, rioting, unlawful assemblies, and offences under the Whiteboy Acts. These, of all offences, ought to be taken out of the category of magistrates' duties and be tried by a jury. If there was one thing that the English Legislature had been careful about, it was in not intrusting to magistrates the power of deciding any of those criminal matters which bore on political offences. He was certainly much surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary allege that no new offence would be created by the Bill. It was no offence in English law to solicit a person to combine with others to induce men not to fulfil their legal obligations. Though the English law reached those who combined to induce others to commit a felony, it did not touch those who attempted to persuade to a misdemeanour. This Bill also gave a power of imprisoning with hard labour for a common law conspiracy, when the English law only allowed imprisonment without hard labour; and even in these cases a jury was required in England but would not be required in Ireland. He (Mr. Gully) had been looking at the Whiteboy Acts, with offences under which magistrates would have the power to deal, and he had found that many of the offences specified in them were purely political. In other cases the punishment inflicted was immensely severer than that accorded to like offences in England. For example, in an Act passed in 1831—which was a mitigating Act—the punishment imposed on maliciously breaking fences was transportation for life, instead of death as previously, or three years' imprisonment with three public whippings, whereas in England the offender was only fined £5, and for repeated offences imprisonment for 12 months. In cases of incitement to unlawful combinations the Whiteboy Acts imposed seven years' transportation or three years' imprisonment, and under this Bill magistrates might inflict six months' imprisonment. Under the conjoint operation of those Acts and this Bill it would hardly be safe for a man to write a letter on a political subject unless he desired to run the risk of six months' imprisonment. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had said that this part of the Bill dealt with matters which had to be lightly treated. Would the right hon. Gentleman think himself lightly treated if he went over to Belfast and made a speech like that which the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord

Randolph Churchill) had made some time ago, and found that he was sent to gaol for six months with hard labour for exciting to violence? The right hon. Gentleman argued that the Bill was never intended to apply to such cases. That was the vice of the Bill. The provision was so wide that it might be applied to cases to which it was never intended to apply. That, again, showed that the Bill gave a discretion which ought never to be intrusted to individuals. This was not a mere question of detail. The whole section was wholly and utterly bad, and there was scarcely a section in the Bill which was not open to the same objection. With regard to the change of venue, neither the Scotch law nor the English law was adopted; but the Attorney General for Ireland seemed to think that the just thing to do was to split the difference. But, inasmuch as we were told that the English law and the Irish law were intended to be the same, why was not the same rule adopted in Ireland as in England; why was all the weight thrown against the Irish prisoners, and why was he obliged to show, not that as fair, but that a fairer trial could be had in some other place than where the Attorney General proposed? There was another section in which the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland created by his *ipse dixit* an offence not before known to the law. The Lord Lieutenant had only to say he was satisfied that an association was disturbing law and order, and to issue a Proclamation proclaiming any district, and then not only might every such association be suppressed, but any person who attended one of its meetings after the Proclamation was liable to prosecution and heavy punishment. It was a wholly unheard-of thing that a Lord Lieutenant should be entitled to make that an offence, which was before not an offence known to the law. It was said that Parliament might refuse to endorse the action of the Lord Lieutenant. But here was an Executive officer who created a crime, probably after consultation with the Cabinet, and it became a sort of Cabinet question that the Proclamation should be upheld. The so-called safeguard—the endorsement by Parliament of the Lord Lieutenant's Proclamation—was no safeguard at all, because the upholding of the Proclamation would always be made a Cabinet question, and a Party majority would thus, for the first time in history, create *ex post facto* offences which did not exist in the law. There was no excess of criminality in Ireland; but there was a want of confidence in and respect for the law; and it was the fundamental error of the Government Bill that it dealt with Ireland as if the remedy for such a state of things was to pass still more severe laws to be administered by the same persons and under more stringent methods. This was a very stringent measure; but if it were far less stringent he would record his vote against it, because it was a fresh entry upon a well-trodden path which had always led those who walked in it to disunion and destruction, and because it was a path which all thought had been abandoned twelve months ago by both sides of the House and by all Parties in the State.

Mr. THEOBALD (Essex, Romford) said, he was opposed to coercion, and he was not the only one on that (the Ministerial) side of the House who held the same opinion. The House had been told by the right hon Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—who ought to be authorities on those matters—that there was a paucity of crime in Ireland, and that such crime as existed was confined to a few portions of the country. The Representatives of Ireland said the same thing, and they surely ought to be a great authority on this matter. If there were any diminution in crime at the present time in Ireland, the diminution was not due to the flourishing state of that country, for we all, with sorrow, admit that it is in a distressful state. But hon. Members below the Gangway would say that it was due to the fact that the laws were better obeyed than formerly; but the laws so obeyed were not those of the constituted authority of the Realm; they were the atrocious and vile laws of the National League, which had struck terror into the Irish people, that made them yield a paralyzed obedience to its unwritten law instead of obedience to the law of the land. It was to this coercion that he was opposed—the coercion that drove the people to obey the unwritten law of the National League, an atrocious law against which there was no appeal, and which closed the lips of those who would appeal in the silence of the grave. The League deprived the Irish people of the liberty which was enjoyed in England under the laws of the Empire. [*Laughter.*] Irish Members opposite might laugh, but he appealed to them to say by whose authority it was that notice was served on those who offended against the laws of the League. Who commissioned Captain Moonlight? and by whose authority were the dread crimes committed in Ireland? Assuredly not those who were opposed to the League. These things must be done by the League, or by people in connection with the League. Therefore members of the League were in some way responsible for them. If they were not, it would be easy for them to prove that they had nothing to do with them. With the organization of which they had control, surely they could bring to justice some of the men who committed the vile deeds which blackened the character of the Irish people, and deprived them of their liberty. If five-sixths of the Irish Members were opposed to the Bill, it was because they were either members or nominees of the League, and therefore they resisted a measure the object of which was to restore obedience to the law of the land. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had not always displayed such a respect for Irish opinion as represented by hon. Members from Ireland. Not long ago the right hon. Gentleman appealed to the country for a majority large enough to enable him to deal with the Irish Question independent of the Irish Members. Surely when he made that appeal he must have intended to deal with the Irish Question in a way which would not be approved by the majority of the Irish Members, and not in accordance with their dictates. Because the voice of the country went against him, and he came back with an attenuated following, he had made an alliance with those he had desired to regard as opponents, and of whom he had spoken in the most sarcastic and violent terms. And the position now assumed by the Opposition was analogous to that of a counsel who asked that the law should be altered to suit the convenience of the criminal he was defending. As allusion had been made by the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Northampton to the exercise of magisterial authority by Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas, he would call the attention of the hon. Member for Derby, who poses as an authority on historical matters, to the crucifixion of the two thieves, one of whom admitted the justice of his punishment, and received pardon; but what about the other one? He did not admit his guilt; and he was of the opinion of the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) that the question of law and order could not be dealt with by itself. He died impenitent. Is the right hon. Member for Derby also impenitent? He would also refer him to Cain, who committed a breach of social order, but he did not admit his guilt; and it was to be feared that Cain's mantle had descended on the ample shoulders of the right hon. Member for Derby, who was the 19th century apostle of the principle acted upon by Cain. He was surprised at the arguments put forward by right hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite, that social order can not be dealt with by itself. That statement would be strange for a layman, but for a learned Member it was staggering. Just let them think of what the right hon. Member for Derby would do if, upon going home from the House some evening, he found that some object that he cherished was missing, say, his favourite armchair, which he had so amply filled—that armchair in which he had indulged in reveries of the kaleidoscope character of his political—he would not say convictions, for no one knew what they were, and he doubted if he had any—but of his political expressions, and had indulged in many ambitious hopes of the future, and built many castles in the air; and which armchair had been a safe and comfortable retreat in which to gather up courage in order to undergo, before retiring to rest, the dread ordeal of looking under the bed to see if there lurked there any would-be assassin—would he not do all in his power to bring to justice that purloiner of his armchair, and get him convicted, instead of questioning his own right to that armchair? The right hon. Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) said you could not deal with social order until you had dealt with the Land Question, and that you could not deal with the Land Question without you had a Central Body, with strength and efficiency between each individual tenant and the

State, and you could not have that Central Authority until you had Home Rule. But suppose that argument to be applied to the case of the mob who not long ago pillaged shops in the West End of London. Suppose it was said that you could not deal with the social order until you had dealt with the question of property—for property, and not land, was at stake in this case, and you could not deal with the question of property without you have a Central Body with strength and efficiency between each purloiner of goods and the State; and you cannot have that Central Body without you give the authority into the hands of the law-breakers, and thus advocate the giving over the government of London by day to thieves, and by night to burglars—a state of bliss that he would be peculiar in wishing for. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to have drunk deeply of the cup of treason which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) had denounced his allies as being steeped to the lips in—they appeared to have stewed well in a certain kind of juice which the right hon. Gentleman (Sir William Harcourt) had called "Parnellite juice," which, he said, stank in the nostrils. Has it, from familiarity become, instead of noxious, of sweet savour and delicious perfume, a healing Balm of Gilead, to save them from the chillness of the cold shade of the Opposition; or do they support this combination which is floated on the dollar stream from America, and now want to divert into that channel the stream of rent that should flow from the pockets of the tenants into the pockets of the landlords? Has the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian embarked on that stream and cut his cables, in the hope that on the high tide of that stream he may float across the Table of the House, and find himself in the haven where he would be—namely, on the Treasury Bench? Many precedents had been alluded to by hon. Members opposite, but they had only been of such a character as to throw dust in the eyes of the House, and to draw its attention from the great principle that underlay the government of this country and of all countries in the world—namely, that the law of the country should be maintained. They were not there in Parliament only to make laws for the land; they had a higher and an ever-existing duty to perform—namely, to see the law maintained and to enforce obedience to that law. What was the good of the House having a mind to think, and a tongue to talk, and a power to enact laws, if it had no arm to strike, and to give effect to its thoughts, its expressions, and its actions? If that arm, as was the case at present, was not sufficiently strong to enforce obedience to the law, it was the duty of all right-minded men to strengthen that arm and give the Government the power they asked to enable them to enforce obedience to the law, now set at nought by a body which was not a combination against rent, but a combination to make the government of Ireland impossible to those who were intrusted with the reins of government in that country. It was because the law of the land did not reign in Ireland, and was set at nought by a secret society whose laws were obeyed, that it was the duty of the House to support Her Majesty's Government in the Bill which they had laid before the House on the present occasion, and which, he thought, would be supported by all those who had at heart the welfare of the country.

Mr. W. H. JAMES (Gateshead) said, he had listened to many of the speeches made on the other side of the House in the course of the debate in amazement and with pain, and especially so with regard to the speech this afternoon of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland), who announced that the Government would make no concession whatever, but would hold unswervingly in their adherence to the principles forming the basis of the Bill. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) last night spoke of the Bill in terms of easy and pleasant satisfaction, as if no course could be more acceptable to him than to introduce a Bill of this character. For his (Mr. W. H. James) own part, he would have expected to hear that right hon. and learned Gentleman speak with a feeling of pain and humiliation of the fact that he was to take part in a Government endeavouring to pass a measure of that kind against his own countrymen. There was an old adage he was reminded of, that—"When you want to roast an Irishman, you must get another Irishman to turn the spit." It appeared to him that the Government had entered upon a most dangerous and perilous course. They had taken up the whole time of the House for the measure; and, instead of listening to the opinions of hon. Gentlemen representing all quarters, had trusted rather to dangerous and insidious advisers outside the House, who were now trying to induce them to enter upon a course of intense peril to this country—a course which would involve us in troubles which one could scarcely conceive. Some time ago the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain) said that the true object of representative government was to reflect the views of those represented. It appeared to him that if the right hon. Gentleman still held to those views, it was his duty to oppose the second reading; but if his views were entirely changed—if he had entirely departed from those opinions which formed the basis of all true Liberalism—it was the right hon. Gentleman's duty no longer to sit upon the Bench, but to look his opponents in the face, and to walk over to the other side of the House. It was germane to ask, now they had entered on that course, how the Bill was likely to get on? Was this measure likely to pass? They had been engaged in passing a Procedure Resolution of about six lines, and they had occupied several weeks in doing so; but this was a measure of about 20 clauses, and he thought before they got it passed there might be a prospect of coercion outside, and the Bill might be passed by some degrading and revolting exhibition of physical force. Did the Government forget the examples of 1881 and 1882? They all knew what difficulty there was in passing such measures when there were 40 Irish Nationalists in the House, and now they had to face 100. The right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Colonies spoke as if the Government were in earnest, and that there were some parts of the Bill the Government were determined to go forward with. He (Mr. W. H. James) was under the impression that if strongly objected to the provision for bringing prisoners to England for trial would be dropped. The provisions the Government seemed most in earnest about were those dealing with Boycotting and Resident Magistrates. He had not a word to say against the *personnel* of those gentlemen; but the proposal was to intrust to them a discretionary power which was inordinate. If the course were persisted in, there would be no doubt that the Question Paper would be full of Questions which must naturally arise directly such power was given to the magistrates. Lord Camden said—

> "The discretion of a Judge is the law of tyrants. It is always unknown. It is different in different men. It is casual, and depends on constitution, temper, and passion—in the best it is often caprice: in the worst it is every vice, folly, and passion to which human nature is liable."

He would fain hope that there was much in that Bill which the Government did not really intend to go forward with, and that it might turn out to be a policy of brag. It might be said that they were anxious to bluster against the weak, and were equally ready to truckle to the strong. They were told the Bill was only to apply against the criminal; but there was always danger whilst they had such powers. When the Bill was passed there would be those at the side of the Government who might compel them to make use of its powers to strike down their own political opponents. Much light was obtained in contrasting the present time with those when the Irish Question, 20 years ago, was comparatively simple by reading Mr. Butt's pamphlet on Irish Federalism. Such measures might be carried 20 years ago; but since the democracy had been enfranchised, and the Irish people also, it was impossible to carry on the government of Ireland under these exploded Coercion Acts. Mr. Butt said, speaking of that time—

> "But anyone who knows the way in which the purely Irish Business is transacted will gravely regret that so much of it is left undone at the close of every Session. In the small hours of the morning a number of small Irish Bills are introduced. No statement is made of their objects or their purposes, and they generally pass through their stages when the grey dawn of the morning is struggling with the subdued light through the stained glass windows of the Commons Hall. The appearance of these Bills is invariably preceded by a flight of a great number of the officials of those Boards which prey upon every Irish interest. These officials hover like birds of evil omen round the Lobbies, or perch under the Galleries, waiting anxiously for the small hours of the morning, when each of them watches over his little crotchet or his little job. These Bills are introduced under various titles and pretexts. Occasionally it will be a Bill to give further powers to Grand Juries in Ireland. Upon examination it is found to be a Bill to saddle the counties with the cost of

some of the numerous blunders of the Board of Works. At other times it is a Bill to explain and amend an Act explaining and amending the Fishery Laws, and the gist and substance of it is found to be in a clause destroying the private property of some Irish gentleman which even the despotic powers of the Fishery Commissioners could not reach. Again, it may be 'a Bill to continue certain expiring Statutes,' beginning with a few Turnpike Acts, and ending in the corner of one of its schedules with one of those coercive measures with regard to which Ministers had yielded the previous Session a provision that it should be enacted only for one year."

In those days it was perhaps easy to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* and pass exceptional measures; but they now had the 85 Irish Members, with the attention of their countrymen all over the world behind them, and it was that, which, if they persisted in their evil methods of government, would permanently obstruct the way. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) was very indignant a few days ago because it had been alleged that the various acts of the Government were in the direction of fomenting popular discontent and provoking the people into something like insurrection; but, while he would not bring such a charge against the right hon. Gentleman himself, he contended that there had been something done by the Government calculated to arouse suspicion in certain minds. He could imagine nothing more conducive to popular discontent, or more exasperating, for example, than the fact that the Government had already thrown two priests into prison. What would be the feeling of English country gentlemen if they saw ministers of religion—men identified with the thoughts and habits of those they lived among—cast into gaol? Would they be likely to look upon such proceedings altogether unmoved? In that connection there was one small matter on which he should like to touch. Some years ago he was at Rome, staying as a personal friend with Sir George Errington, formerly a Member of that House, and with whose antecedents in the Roman capital all were familiar. Having had many opportunities of being in daily communication with prelates and others high in office in the Roman Catholic Church, he had no hesitation in saying—he was a strong Protestant himself—that he saw enough to feel amply satisfied that, notwithstanding powerful adverse efforts, the general feeling of the Roman Catholic authorities in Rome was strongly identified with the Irish National cause. Surely they did not think that by the mere fear of punishment, such as was meted out in this Bill, they would put down outrages so long as the real causes which were the real secret springs of those outrages remained in force. All kinds of legal severity directed to this end, compatible with our form of government, had ignominiously and disastrously failed, and would fail again. Do not let them try in their own self-sufficiency to think they could force their own Saxon ideas upon the Irish people. If they did so, there would be nothing before them but the most barren victory. He wished indeed that the Government would change their tactics, and that what should be done for Ireland in the way of reform should be done speedily. He warned the Government against being too late. The methods employed in carrying the Act of Union with Ireland were often referred to, and he believed there could be no doubt that had Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh foreseen that the Act of Union would have been carried without Catholic Emancipation, they would have had nothing to do with it. There were two courses open to us—either to adopt the policy of conciliation, or to carry out a policy of brute force. Surely this country was great and powerful enough to be just. He believed there was only one alternative, and that was to give the Irish nation their local Parliament. That might not afterwards prove an insuperable instrument in the forecast of events, and he believed the Conservative Party would eventually arrive at the time when they would be prepared to give it. The reason why they hesitated was owing to entanglements connected with the Land Question, and to their relation to the Landlord Party in the House of Lords, who for many generations had guided Irish destinies in connection with this subject. But if there was to be any settlement of the agrarian question, he said they ought to settle the question of local government first. Until that work was accomplished they would make no progress, and their repressive measures would be useless, fruitless, and hopeless in their results.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for SCOTLAND (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson)

(Bute) said, he thought he should make a fair observation on the speech of the hon. Member (Mr. W. H. James), when he said that almost the only topic relating to Ireland which he did not directly touch upon was the Bill before the House. He engaged in a strain of historical allusion and also of prediction, tinged by a somewhat melancholy hue. Many of the speeches, however, which had been delivered the previous night, and that day, from the Opposition Benches had been businesslike and detailed examinations of the measure; but he had listened with especial interest to each successive speech in the hope of discovering some evidence in support of those gigantic accusations which had been made against the Bill both in the House and out of it. They had heard the Bill described as a Bill for the repression of the liberties of the people of Ireland; and, certainly, the number of rhetorical crimes committed in the sacred name of Liberty during the Easter holidays presented an array of statistics which he thought would satisfy the most exacting appetite opposite. He should not reproduce the anthology of vituperation which had been showered upon this measure; but he proposed to discuss the gist and gravamen of the accusation against the Bill—that it was an infringement of liberty. The first observation which might be made upon the general scope of the Bill was, that the liberty of being at large was not one which was infringed by it. It stood distinct from the Coercion Bill of 1881 in this essential and vital principle. Under this Bill no authority in Ireland had the right to commit a man to prison, except for trial; and, in the view of the Constitutional lawyer, in the view of the British citizen, there was all the difference in the world between an alteration in the tribunal by which a man was tried and the methods by which an offence was investigated; and the conferring on Government a right to incarcerate a man, not with a view to trial, but with a view to the safety of the State. Therefore, that element not being present in the Bill, he thought he had a right to press those great advocates of liberty in general, and the liberties of Ireland in particular, with this question—"Which liberty is it that is taken away from the Irish people by the Bill? Liberty to do what?" The word "liberty" was entirely a relative term, and the question was relevant and essential in each case. When they said liberty was infringed, he would ask where was the infringement on the area of the rights of the private citizen that was done by the Bill? A challenge had been made already, and he repeated it; and he directed the challenge especially to those who were more especially conversant with law. He said there was no new offence whatever created by the Bill. He said that after the closest and most careful examination of all the sections which constituted or created new offences. If the Bill was passed, every Irishman would be entitled to do everything which was at present lawful for an Englishman or a Scotsman to do. He would take the 2nd clause, which had been especially singled out for criticism, and the observation he made was this—Had any hon. and learned Gentleman on the opposite side of the House pointed to any single one of the sub-sections, which described acts as unlawful, which it was at present lawful for an Irishman to do? The hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Gully), who spoke that afternoon, made a very guarded and careful examination of that subject, and he left that clause with the observation that, while there was a great deal to be said, or, at least, something to be said, in the way of anthority for each and everyone of these acts being legal, yet nobody could put his finger on the statute which declared it. The hon. and learned Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell), bringing to this subject an unrivalled experience, and speaking with due consideration, treated this subject with even more caution. He (Mr. Robertson), did not hear in the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman a single assertion that any act that was at present lawful was made unlawful by the Bill. He applied this remark not merely to the 2nd clause, which was the most explicit in declaring offences; but he applied it also to that section which related to the action of the Lord Lieutenant. There might be much to be said upon the novelty and importance of constituting the Lord Lieutenant the tribunal which was to specify what was or was not an unlawful association; but he did not hear the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney say one word to the effect that an association which might be described by any of the letters from A to E in Section 6 was not at present an unlawful association. But he asserted that, according to the law of Scotland, no man could safely be a member of an association which did any of those things, or which had any of those characteristics, without being amenable to the Criminal Law. They had had brought forward as a spectre and a "bogey" to frighten timid Members the shadow of the Whiteboy Acts. He (Mr. Robertson) had done for the Whiteboy Acts, what he believed almost no one on the other side had done—that was to say, he had read them. They were said to be blood-stained Acts, and they were declared to be associated with all the traditionary horrors of Ireland's misfortunes. That, however, was not the point in reference to the question whether prosecutions being facilitated under the Whiteboy Acts was or was not an invasion of Irish liberty. As regarded the Whiteboy Acts, having examined them, and that entirely with the eye of a lawyer, he would make these assertions about them—first, that they inflicted tremendous penalties for certain crimes, some of which were of an atrocious character — attacks on the person, attacks on property, and invasions of liberty. They also referred to offences which were not of an atrocious character, but which were not the less distinct offences, some of them being in the nature of riot, and such as would be prohibited by the Riot Act; but there was another, and, perhaps, still larger class, which attracted the picturesque fancy of the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart)—cases of persons wearing peculiar dresses. But the way in which hon. Members dealt with these clauses was to miss out the words which qualified the criminality of the offences; and he (Mr. Robertson) said of those offences, over which ridicule instead of horror was cast, that they were the most plain-sailing breaches of the peace that had ever come before a Police Court. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) had varied the phraseology of the general accusation, and he said last night that this was a tyrannous and monstrous Bill. That was a large accusation; but he (Mr. Robertson) thought if the right hon. Gentleman had postponed his adjectives until he made his nouns, possibly the adjectives might never have come. The right hon. Gentleman descended from these generalities to two particulars, and he had great alarm as to the Constitutional effects of the clauses which related to intimidation. He was especially alarmed at the definition of intimidation which occurred in the latter part of the Bill; and he said, if they passed that along with the language of the operative section, there would be a terrible danger. He (Mr. Robertson) had one historical observation to make upon that, and it was this:—If that was an objection appropriate for the second reading of the Bill, then it was a fact that the right hon. Gentleman voted in 1882 for the second reading of a Bill which contained almost identically the same provision. The right hon. Gentleman's other point was this—and he (Mr. Robertson) joined issue with him on the question of fact—he said if the Bill was passed, that being a member of the National League would constitute a crime, and that almost every peasant in Ireland, being a member of the National League, would accordingly be subject to the penalty. But that was not the fact. No one, under the Bill, would be subject to a penalty unless he did some overt act in connection with an illegal association. Accordingly, the effect of the Bill was merely to warn all concerned that to commit any overt act in connection with this illegal association was an offence against the law. Much of the rhetoric used out-of-doors and of argument urged inside the House against the Bill was involved in the incessant repetition of the statement that the offences that would be prosecuted under the Bill would be political offences. What was meant by a political offence? If by a political offence was meant an offence against the State, and especially of the character of a conspiracy, then he said that, fortunately, the most of the crime which was to be dealt with under the Bill was not of that character; but if it was meant that certain politics in Ireland had been so corrupted as to become a stimulus and an incitement to crime, then he said they were political offences in that sense, and not the less ought they to be put down by the strong arm of the law. What the Bill did was merely this. If and in so far as a political association meddled with and was identified with crime, and thrived and prospered by crime, it was made illegal; but if and in so far as it could exist without the instigation or operation of crime, it would remain lawful; and so far as politics were concerned, the effect of the Bill was merely that it would purge Irish politics of crime. Therefore, he affirmed, regarding the Bill, that there were no new limitations of freedom in this sense—that there were no new offences created, and, consequently, they might sleep soundly so far as regarded Irish liberty. Their opponents had not seriously controverted that contention. He had made a direct challenge to hon. Members opposite, and he should like to dwell upon it for one special reason. He was the more convinced that he was right in what he had said, that there was no new offence created, no invasion of freedom, because he found that that was an aspect of the case which was so distasteful to hon. Members opposite that they went the length of not saying anything about it. He would take the fairest as well as the most eminent of their opponents, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne (Mr. John Morley); and he referred in particular to a speech delivered in South London last Wednesday, in which the right hon. Gentleman touched upon the subject. He had, however, made no examination of the argument the Government had advanced, that there was no limitation of freedom, that no liberty was repressed by the creation of any new offence. The right hon. Gentleman had nothing to say about that, except this—that the excuse offered by the Government for the measure was such as had been the pretence and excuse of tyrants from the beginning of time. With all his historical knowledge, the most complete parallel which the right hon. Gentleman could find for the wrong-doing of the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) was to compare him to King Henry VIII. That parallel was to some extent illustrated by another rhetorical flight to which the right hon. Gentleman next proceeded. So angry was the right hon. Gentleman with this argument against the outcry in favour of freedom, that he preceeded to give a bit of his mind to his own allies below the Gangway, and, taking a liberty which no one on that side of the House would do, he assimilated their country to a lunatic, and said that the difference between the two Parties might be illustrated in this way—the chains and the prison were applied by the one political Party, and a milder and gentler treatment by the other. He (Mr. Robertson) was afraid that these rhetorical flights could only be explained by the circumstance that the right hon. Gentleman was addressing a transpontine audience. King Henry VIII. and a lunatic and clanking chains formed a strong theatrical situation. He was sure that the applause which the newspapers said greeted the close of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was an expression of profound gratification that that portion of South London had found that the dramatic instincts which it had long cherished were shared by philosophers and statesmen. Turning from that, however, he asserted, without the least fear of contradiction, that the Bill was rightly entitled a Bill to make better provision for the prevention and punishment of crime in Ireland. It was a Bill which effected extensive and, in some respects, important changes upon procedure. There was one portion of the evidence before them upon which their case was founded by the Government, but which had not been mentioned by any previous speaker, upon which he would like to say a word. He did not refer to the evidence contained in the Blue Book produced by the Royal Commission, nor to the Report of the majority of the Commissioners, but to the Report of Mr. Knipe. That Report contained this remarkable feature. Mr. Knipe dissented from the recommendations of the majority of the Commissioners upon two points, and his differences were clearly set forth in the Report. The first of these was that he thought the majority of the Commissioners did not attach sufficient importance to the source of the disorganization which prevailed in Ireland, and that more importance had been attached to what he considered to be the excessive rents. Mr. Knipe's other point of difference was, that he deprecated what he described as measures of coercion. But the fact that he pointed out what he differed with the Commissioners upon, showed very clearly what he agreed with them upon. The Commission, in a page of their Report, had presented a picture of society in Ireland expressed in terms measured and at the same time graphic, and he did not find that Mr. Knipe expressed the smallest dissent from the accuracy of that picture. Hon. Members below the Gangway said the evidence taken by the Commissioners was incomplete; but Mr. Knipe was there as a representative of the interests, as associated with hon. Members. ["No!"] At all events, he represented the tenant farmers of Ireland, and his recommendations had been quoted by hon. Members. Mr. Knipe did not suggest that the measures taken by the Commission to bring together evidence were otherwise than fair and complete. ["Oh, oh!"] He challenged hon. Members opposite to bring before the consideration of the House any portion of Mr. Knipe's Report which threw the slightest doubt upon the statement of the Commissioners that the view they gave of the condition of Ireland was accurate. For his part, he (Mr. Robertson) went with greater confidence to the conclusion that, upon the Report of the Commissioners, and the evidence taken by them, it was manifest that the state of Ireland was intolerable and required a cure. Much had been said, in the course of the debate, as to the details of the Bill; but a great deal in the Bill was simply a reproduction of the system which had immemorially existed in Scotland. Hon. Gentlemen opposite called upon the people of this country to rise in their thousands to protest against a yoke being put upon the people of Ireland which they were unable to bear. If liberty was lost in that way, Scotland had been undone for centuries. All the clauses relating to preliminary investigation embody with almost complete accuracy and absolute similarity the existing machinery in Scotland. Hon. Gentlemen had, however, pointed to one difference, and that was with regard to preliminary investigations where no person was charged. It was said—and it was made much of—that the class of officials who conducted the preliminary inquiries in Scotland were always trained lawyers; whereas the Bill did not restrict the power to magistrates who were lawyers, and that that differentiated the one system from the other. But hon. Gentlemen must distinguish that, in ordinary cases, such inquiries were not conducted in Scotland by the Sheriff or Sheriff Substitute, but by the Procurator Fiscal, who was his agent. The Procurator Fiscal was a lawyer, but not a Judge; and the Procurator Fiscal had intrusted to him the probing and investigating into criminal occurrences which excited the alarms of hon. Gentleman opposite. He agreed entirely with what was said by his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland), that those operations were not of a judicial character, and did not require the higher judicial qualities at all on the part of those who conducted them. They were not judicial, but inquisitorial duties. And he (Mr. Robertson) suspected that the difference between having an investigation conducted by a man who was a lawyer and one who was not, was that the former would be a sharper instrument than the latter, and that the inquiry conducted by a person who was not a lawyer, would not be so thorough and searching. Accordingly, that was a paper objection, and not an objection in substance. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) was pleased to join in the chorus of general condemnation with which that part of the Bill had been hailed on the other side. The hon. Member said the Scottish procedure was all very well; but it was adapted to a normal state of society. Well, if that meant that in Scotland, fortunately, they had a normal state of society, one agreed with that. But if he meant that the measures now under consideration were chosen or selected for operation with a normal state of society, that was not the case, and the hon. Gentleman was mistaken, for the system most distinctly contemplated the refusal of witnesses to give evidence, and the means to be taken to compel them to give such evidence. He would read what was delivered by the chief authority upon crime in Scotland, Baron Hume. Hume said, speaking of the administration of the oath—

> "It is within the competence of the Sheriff to administer the oath during this investigation. Nay, more, though it is not the ordinary course of proceedings, yet, still, in these cases where, owing to popular favour towards a prisoner or towards an offence, the truth cannot otherwise be obtained, it is lawful, and has often been the practice, to put the witnesses on oath."

In another sentence, in the same passage, Hume said—

> "If they obstinately refuse to answer, they may, in like manner, be coerced with imprisonment till they comply."

The next point, to which great objection had also been taken, was as to the mode and place of trial. Here, again, the parallel between the proposed system and that in existence in Scotland was more than complete; because, under the Scotch system, larger powers were placed in the hands of the Executive than any which this Bill proposed to place in the hands of the Irish Executive. Hon. Gentlemen were much distressed about the power to send persons for summary trial before Resident Magistrates. Why, at present in Scotland, it was the function of the Lord Advocate to consider the mode and place of trial. The graver offences were, as a rule, tried before a jury; but there was a very large class of cases in which it was within the discretion of the Lord Advocate to say whether there should be a jury, and, if there was to be a jury, whether the trial should take place in the district, or in Edinburgh. That power was exercised with the most direct relation, both to the quality of the offence and the circumstances of the society in which it was committed, and if it was thought favour existed in the district, either on one side or on the other, it would be the duty of the Lord Advocate so to determine the trial that justice would be done. Was not that the whole case here? Were they making an incursion into a partially civilized country in order to bring up to the surface some archaic and oppressive system by which there should be less freedom than existed in Ireland, or merely adopting a system ascertained to secure the objects of justice? It was sufficient to say that the system was found to work well, and to conduce to the fulfilment of justice in Scotland. The special juror system had also brought forth the animadversion of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. He passed from that with this comment, that there was no criminal in Scotland who had not five special jurors upon his panel. The question of jury trial was one of profound interest for those who had the concern of Constitutional Law at heart; but he could concede to hon. Gentlemen opposite no special guardianship of that right. But there was no Constitutional law that jury trial was a right in a community, otherwise than as a means for the attainment of justice. Some hon. Gentlemen, indeed, had laid it down that to be tried by a jury was a Constitutional right. But such was not the case. Trial by jury was not a fetish, before which must be offered up the very objects for which it existed. There was no tradition in favour of jury trial in this country, except in so far as jury trial was identified with freedom and justice. References had been made to the old honoured memories of jury trial both in England and Scotland. The history of jury trials constituted a romance of the highest interest; but if they eliminated from the victories and triumphs of jury trial the fact that innocence was vindicated by the jury, the plot of the story was gone. It was a system set up to secure the due and fair trial of those charged with certain offences, and the reason that nations were proud of trial by jury was, because its successful working was a demonstration that the community was responsive to the obligations of justice. But from the descriptions given of the condition of Ireland, it did not seem suited for jury trial. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) described the condition of Ireland as in a state of social disorganization. That was quite enough for his (Mr. Robertson's) purpose. If the state of society was disorganized, he said, jury trial ought to be at all events set aside in the meantime. It ought not to be relied upon as calculated to fulfil duties which could only be performed by those who acted with a single eye towards the discharge of justice. Some hon. Gentlemen had spoken as if the right to be tried by jury existed in every body and as regarded all offences. But that was not the case. The most ordinary acquaintance with existing facts showed that, under the ordinary law of Britain, there were a great number of cases, where the intelligence and common-sense instincts of a jury would be of use, which were sent to a police magistrate. Take the case of first accusations of theft. It was often the turning point of a lad's or girl's career. It was a most delicate point, and yet it went to a magistrate without a jury. There was, however, one general observation he might make upon the criticism of hon. Gentlemen opposite. If they were at the beginning of things, and were determining whether there should be a jury or a magistrate to try particular cases, he could quite understand there was a great deal to be said for the objections that had been stated; but was it fair to conduct this discussion without first making up their minds whether jury trial was practicable, and if it was ascertained to be impracticable, then ought there not to be a little more moderation in the censure that was passed on the inevitable substitutes that were set up for it? In listening to the arguments of hon. Gentlemen opposite, so far as they were directed to a criticism upon the Bill, he had been struck with their air of unreality. There was, underlying the whole of the attacks on this measure, one foregone conclusion, which seemed to him to invalidate their authority and vitiate their argument. The fatal pledges of last summer had committed them to the view that no salvation for Ireland was possible which came from the British Parliament. When he heard speech after speech, feebly and with half-heart, discussing the provisions of this Bill, winding up with more or less eloquent perorations in favour of Home Rule, he saw in every case a complete disclosure of the motive and view of the speaker. From that circumstance, the debate had been suffused with an ardour and with an anger which did not arise from the provisions of the measure itself. Gentlemen opposite had at last resorted to measures to promote the discussion of the Bill in Parliament which did not increase his confidence, and which could not increase the confidence of the country in the view which they took of the interests of Ireland. Those Constitutional purists began that week by changing the venue to Hyde Park; and when they got there, they proceeded to pack the jury with Socialists. But the somewhat pedestrian moderation of the speeches they had heard from late Cabinet Ministers since Monday seemed to point to that enterprise in the Park, and in the country, sharing the fate of other not very promising speculations, and being turned into a limited liability concern. There was, however, one vestige of the lofty talk which characterized not merely the spoken, but the written, utterances of those authorities upon which he should like to say a word. It was said that the Bill ought not to be adopted, because five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland were against it. He should like to put this test. Suppose five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland insisted, not as now for Home Rule, but for national separation from this country, would not the same argument have precisely the same effect? Was not the origin of the refusal of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway to entertain the idea of the improvement of the Criminal Law of Ireland merely this—that they had a vested interest in the disturbance of Ireland; that they would not permit that to be removed, except on payment of the price which they had demanded? There was another test, which he put with great respect to right hon. Gentlemen opposite. They had, last night, two speeches and two perorations, each of which contained more or less shadowy assertions that there was an alternative policy which meant conciliation. He asked, was that alternative policy of conciliation to come from the Imperial Parliament or not? Up to the present date, they had not heard a single politician of any authority mention or adumbrate in the darkest and vaguest manner any measures which could be passed by the Imperial Parliament which should come in place of this policy of Home Rule. He put another test. He put it interrogatively; but he relied upon the candour of the House for an answer. Suppose the agrarian proposals of the Government were to more than realize the most ardent expectations and desires of the most ardent land reformer opposite — but that these measures should come the British Parliament, would the National League, in that event, relax its grasp upon Ireland? Suppose the British Parliament were to give each tenant in Ireland his holding for nothing but the fee simple, would they not sit down and meddle with the proprietor by the same sort of organization as that which now subjugated the tenant? They had not concealed, in those debates, that one need for this Bill was that conciliation must be, and ought to be, tried in Ireland—conciliation in the sense of an improvement of the condition of the agriculturists in Ireland—and measures were being prepared for that purpose; but, in order to the attainment of that object, it was necessary to pass this Bill, the motto of which might be one which could not fall ungratefully upon the ears of hon. Gentlemen opposite—"Hands off!" In order that the measures proposed might receive fair consideration, or any consideration at all, it was necessary that there should be an effective guard put round them to prevent their being strangled in their cradle. They had abundant warrant in previous experience for the belief that an attempt of that kind would be made, as it had been made in the past, unless precautions were taken, and they had abundant justification for the Legislature and the Executive taking it into their own hands to provide the necessary protection, and ensure that it should not rest with the patriotism or the discrimination of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite how that protection was afforded. The point of the reply of the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney to his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, that it was a mistake to suppose that the Nationalist Party, by which he meant the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends, had not given fairplay to the Bill of 1881. The statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman sounded at the time as a somewhat remarkable account of a very recent political event, and consequently he (Mr. Robertson) had the curiosity to refer to what was said on the subject by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. Speaking at Leeds on the 7th of October, 1881, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "How has Mr. Parnell met us during the last Session? With every effort he could use to disparage, to discredit, and, if he could, to destroy the Land Bill. But he did not dare to go beyond a certain point. He did not dare to vote against the Bill like a man; because he knew that, if he did, his own Land Leaguers in Ireland would rise in a body against him."

That completely gainsaid the version of that historical incident which was put forward by the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Charles Russell), and he could only account for the discrepancy by the change in the relations between the two sides of the Gangway which had occurred since that event took place. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was not content to succumb in 1881 before the action of his present allies in the attempt to strangle his beneficent land measures, for in that same speech he said—

> "We are determined that no force and no fear of ruin through force shall, so far as we are concerned, and as it is in our power to decide the question, prevent the Irish people from having full and free benefit of the Land Act."

And acting up to the bold declaration which was then made, he shut up the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork in prison. Not the same measures, but measures for the same legitimate object, ought to be adopted by any Parliament which intended that legislation which it passed should not be futile and a mockery; and, accordingly, not by placing any embargo upon any legitimate political action, but by clipping the wings of political agitation—so far as they tampered with crime—it was proposed that Parliament should couple the legislation regarding land that was now proposed with effectual safeguards in the interests of society. It had been said this Parliament had no mandate in favour of coercion. The only mandate which, so far as he knew, the Unionist Party obtained from the country was a mandate to maintain the authority of the Imperial Parliament over Ireland. That, and nothing else, was their mandate. But it seemed to him the mandate applied most directly to cases where it was attempted to filch away from under their eyes the authority and control of the law in Ireland. It would be a fraud on their constituents to pretend that the enemy they were authorized to fight were only Parliamentary enemies proposing a change of that authority by statute. Their duty was to maintain the authority of Parliament now, and at present, and against all who by force or fraud attempted to defeat it. They had, at present, a problem to deal with, the main features of which were actually admitted. The Imperial Parliament had to encounter in Ireland an anonymous power which stopped its path, usurped its authority, and gainsaid its laws. It was desired by that (the Ministerial) side of the House, by the whole Unionist Party, and he believed by the vast majority of the people of the country, that the Imperial Parliament should no longer tamper with that enemy. In a case of that kind the plain frank words which should be spoken were these—"One of us two must rule and the other must obey, and we (the Government) mean to rule." Hon. and right hon.

Gentleman opposite might be presumed to know best the business of their own Party; but, if so, he hoped it might not be presumptuous for them (the Unionists) to think that they might possibly know theirs. The Party opposite had been making surrenders to his side of essential principles of politics and of social life of the highest value to civilization and freedom. Last year, they gave up to them (the Unionists) the sole and undisputed keeping of that great inheritance of Empire, which had proved to be the pride, as it was the privilege, of the humblest elector under the recent Acts. He believed, so far as the constituencies were concerned, that the only doubt in their minds at present was, whether they (the Imperial Parliament) were not standing chopping logic too long over this Bill. He believed the people saw the Government grasping the banners of Imperial unity, and now of civil and religious liberty, and would appropriate these as the peculiar heritage of the Unionist Party to defend in Ireland. They would not be deterred by the rhetoric which had been used during this campaign. They would be more apt to remember the rough words that were said by a shrewd observer of British politics last century, that "He heard the loudest yelps for liberty from the drivers of negroes." He believed that the emancipation of Ireland from the thrall which had dethroned civil liberty and placed it in abeyance, was an enterprise which should enlist the brain and sinew of the great majority of the British electors, and that and nothing else was the enterprise to which the Government was committed.

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said, he did not think the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland had met the arguments of legal Gentlemen on the Opposition side, especially the arguments of the hon. and learned Member for Carlisle (Mr. Gully), who had proved that new offences were created by the Bill. He had been sorry to hear the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) indulge in a sneer at the meeting in Hyde Park on Monday. The testimony of the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart), and of the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), who had been present at every great Hyde Park demonstration for the last 20 years, was that the meeting was the largest, the most orderly, the most purely political in its character of any that had ever been seen there; and not only was the holiday-making element conspicuous by its absence, but as to the rowdy element there was no such element in the meeting at all. In regard to this Bill, he wished to express his strong feeling that we could ill afford to add one more to the long tale of mistakes which we had made in our dealings with Ireland. The effects of this Bill would be twofold—renewed disaster and disgrace to Great Britain, and renewed trouble and misery for the Irish people. Therefore, it was his intention to vote against it and for the Amendment. It was astonishing to note how watchful the English people had been in the past of the liberties of foreign nations—how ready they had been to interfere for the protection of the liberties of peoples abroad, and yet how blind they had been, at the same time, to their own treatment of Ireland. Was it not a little ridiculous to lecture Austria, Russia, and Turkey about the misgovernment of their Provinces, to endeavour to cast motes out of the eyes of the Czar and the Sultan, while we had that in our own eye of which we had good reason to be ashamed, and which blinded us to the duty of applying to Ireland principles perfectly clear to us, as lookers-on, in the case of foreign States? He thought, however, that this Bill was doing much to clear the vision of some Liberal Members, and of many Liberals in the country. The attention lately concentrated on Ireland had awakened the people to the facts about Irish land, and as to the cruel and merciless system of evictions that had long prevailed in that unfortunate country. People asked, could anything palliate the criminality of a system attended by such barbarous evictions as those recently witnessed at Glenbeigh? There was another point on which those Liberals who called themselves Unionists had, it seemed to him, been somewhat blind. Had they realized the full meaning and the consequences of granting popular representation to Ireland? Did they realize the meaning and serious importance of the fact that, after so largely extending the suffrage, and granting the ballot to Ireland, 85 out of 103 Representatives of that country were firmly hostile to coercion, and were united in demanding in a Constitutional manner the right of self-government? He could understand the position of Lord Salisbury, who left Lord Derby's Government in 1867 rather than support the granting of household suffrage, and the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), who carried his opposition much further; but Liberals must realize that this country could not go on treating the Irish people and the Irish Members as a set of naughty boys; and that we must either give up the old policy of coercion, and listen to the demands of the Irish people, or abrogate the representation, and deal with Ireland on the principles we had condemned in the case of Russia and Turkey. What was the moment chosen for the introduction of that Bill? Hope had been dawning for the Irish people; coercion had been deliberately dropped by the Conservative Government in 1885, in spite of the state of facts dwelt upon last night by the Home Secretary. Lord Carnarvon, and other Members of that Government, encouraged the hopes of the Irish people, and negotiated with their Leaders on the eve of the Election. Then came the proposals and the Bills of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. These were stages in the dawn of hope for the Irish people, and this was the moment chosen for bringing in this most inauspicious and insulting Bill. He called it most insulting—first, because, for the first time, such a Bill was to be a permanent measure, and that in the teeth of the opposition of the great bulk both of the Irish Members and of the Liberal Party; and, secondly, because of the offensive proposal to replace the trial of Irishmen by their peers by trial in England. The very institution and name of trial by jury would be brought into contempt by such a travesty as that contained in the Bill. The Home Secretary had said he was not enthusiastic about that clause; but from his subsequent declarations, and from the speech of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, it was clear that the Government meant to stand by it. As to the mode of working that system of change of venue to England, the Home Secretary said he had great confidence in the chivalrous fairness of English jurors. The hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore) said he thought it would not result in the conviction of one innocent man. Very likely not, nor probably of one guilty man either, because he believed there would be a very general feeling among jurors that the system would be an unfair and un-Constitutional one. His objection to the proposal was, not that it would result in the conviction of innocent men, but that it was repugnant to English feeling, contrary to all true ideas of Constitutional rights, and, above all, that it was probably about the most insulting to Ireland that it was possible to imagine. As to the proposal to have certain trials without juries in Ireland, they ought to consider who were to try those cases and what cases were to be so tried. As to the first point, that had been sufficiently dwelt upon already. But with regard to the offences which the Resident Magistrates were to try, they included indictments for conspiracy, and for the offences vaguely described in the Whiteboy Acts, and accusations of inciting to commit any of the offences which came within the Act. That provision was full of danger to the just rights of the people—to liberty of speech and the liberty of the Press. Let anyone conceive what a trial for conspiracy of any hon. Member of that House would be before a Resident Magistrate appointed because of his connections, his politics, or his large family, and dependent for future employment and salary on the approval of that "Castle" which, two years ago, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) denounced and wished to sweep away. He would like to know what could be the meaning of the Lord Lieutenant being left to judge of the legal qualifications of the Resident Magistrates who were to try certain cases under this Bill? Was it intended to add the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland to the attractive prizes dangled in such profusion before the Irish Bar? In that event, they might live to see Lord Ashbourne occupying that position, in order that he might judge of the legal qualifications of Resident Magistrates. The Secretary of State for the Colonies had said that the strong case of the Chief Secretary for Ireland had been strengthened in the course of the debate; but he (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) believed that the weak case of the Chief

Secretary had been weakened. Much had been said of agrarian crime in Ireland, and very little of the general state of crime in that country, which had decreased in the most remarkable manner since 1885, when on January 1 there were 3,427 convicts in custody, against 1,155 in 1877 and 786 in 1886. The committals for indictable offences had also fallen from 4,183 in 1879 to 2,850 in 1886. Not only had the general crime of the country decreased, but in particular juvenile offences were now so few that reformatories were being closed, and the reformatories which had been closed were those of the Catholics. The Home Secretary had yesterday relied upon the good results of the Act of 1882. But the circumstances of that year were totally different from those of the present time. In 1882 there was a large amount of crime, and the horrible murders in the Phœnix Park were committed; but in January of the present year the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) declared that Ireland was practically free from crime, and it was idle to quote the success of the Act of 1882 as any ground for the present Bill. In 1882 there were secret societies; now there were open associations holding meetings in the noonday. If this Bill were passed, and discontent and agitation were driven below the surface, the secret societies would revive, and there would be crime instead of open agitation. As regards crime, there was admittedly no case for this Bill. It was brought in because of agrarian discontent, caused by the land system, by absentee proprietors, high rents, and evictions—because of consequent combination and intimidation, and of political agitation. He condemned and deplored intimidation, but this measure was not the true cure for that evil. The wise course was to find out the cause of this discontent and this agitation, and remove it. If any special form of crime prevailed—such as rattening in Sheffield, or garrotting in London—an exceptional Criminal Law might be useful; but against politicians in a great political movement, against reformers in an agrarian movement, and against a whole people in a national movement, it would be worse than powerless. It would be full of danger. The Solicitor General for Scotland had said that the Bill would not interfere with the liberty of being at large; but what would be the effect of the extensive suspension of trial by jury? Was it not the intention of the Government to accomplish by this Bill what they had failed to do by the jury system, and to lock up the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and his Friends in prison? As the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) said in an article which appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* in December, 1880, just before Mr. Forster introduced his Coercion Bill—

> "The objections to coercion are not theoretical or fanciful. Experience shows that the action which it is now suggested to take is not adequate to the emergency. . . . Exceptional measures, suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and the rest of it, do not tend to remove or diminish, but to complicate and exasperate the difficulty. You may summarily deprive as many persons as you will of their liberty, but the business of governing Ireland still remains."

When the Government had imprisoned the hon. Member for East Mayo and others, the business of governing Ireland would still remain. The late Mr. Forster told Parliament that if he only had power to shut up "a few village ruffians" all would be well. The House of Commons believed this, and the village ruffians were put in gaol; but the remedy entirely failed. This was in 1881; and the House was disappointed then. Yet they were at it again in 1887; and the Home Secretary talked of "busybodies and petty tyrants," and said that it was their duty to interfere and stop these things. But he only asked Parliament to resort again to means which were applied with absolute want of success in 1881. The right hon. Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) had triumphantly quoted his right hon. Friend's (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) declaration last year that "social order was sapped." But that was their case; that was the argument of the Opposition; that was a paramount reason why they should remove the causes, political and social, of the state of Ireland. They said—"Your measures are not adequate to the emergency." Try responsibility; try self-government. Was it of no use to appeal to right hon. Gentlemen opposite, who approached very near this view in 1885, and had facilities for dealing with the question which the late Government did not possess? They knew that the

Opposition were in earnest, and would help them; so that the question might be settled by the co-operation of both the great Parties and all the great statesmen. The Government and their supporters cast in their teeth the result of the last General Election; but though the Party opposite referred to the question submitted to the electors by the late Government, they did not refer to their own counter-case, to the bills still on the walls—"Vote for Colomb and No Coercion," and similar bills at Stockport, Deptford, and many other constituencies. After the events of this Session, hon. Gentlemen opposite could no longer quote the result of the last Election. Their Election pledges had been scattered to the March winds—pledges for "the largest measure of local self-government consistent with the unity of the Empire;" "Equal laws for the Three Kingdoms;" "No Coercion;" and "No Land Purchase;" and they were now resorting to the policy of coercion which the Liberal Party all along declared was the only alternative to the policy of self-government for Ireland. The Tories themselves condemned coercion at the General Election; the country condemned it now; and the Liberal Party appealed to the British people against a policy dangerous to England, destructive of the Union, and exasperating and insulting to the Irish people.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Baggallay*,)—put, and *agreed to*.

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow*.

SOLICITORS' ANNUAL CERTIFICATE DUTY BILL.—[BILL 125.]

(*Mr. O'Hea, Mr. Dwyer Gray, Mr. Sexton, Mr. A. O'Connor, Mr. Deasy.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Kenny.*)

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, he understood that the Bill proposed to abolish the annual duty on solicitors' certificates, and this raised a very important question.

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow*.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 14*th April*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*)—*Second Reading*—Municipal Trust Company.

PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Royal Irish Constabulary (Officers) * [223].

Second Reading—Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [217] [*Fifth Night*], *debate further adjourned.*

Committee—First Offenders (*re-comm.*) [189]—R.P.

Committee—*Report*—*Third Reading*—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) [1], and *passed.*

Third Reading—Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) [213], and *passed.*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL—*Ordered*—*First Reading*—Pier and Harbour * [222].

Report—Metropolitan Police * [206].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

—o—

MUNICIPAL TRUST COMPANY BILL (*Lords*) (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to move that the discussion of the Bill be deferred.

MR. SPEAKER: As the Bill is down on the Paper by Order, it is not competent for the hon. Member to move that the discussion be deferred.

DR. TANNER: Then I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time on this day six months.

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.): Why?

MR. SPEAKER: Does any hon. Member second the Amendment?

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

SIR CHARLES LEWIS: I do not think that it is necessary that I should say anything in support of the Bill, seeing that the hon. Member opposite has moved its rejection without assigning any reason whatever. [*Cries of* "Agreed!"]

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed.*

QUESTIONS.

—o—

EDUCATION (SCIENCE AND ART DEPARTMENT)—EXTENSION OF EDUCATIONAL SUBJECTS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, If he will consider if the educational subjects to the study of which State encouragement is given, under the Science and Art Department, may be usefully extended so as to include commercial correspondence, shorthand, book-keeping, the routine of business, and the principal foreign languages?

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Sir WILLIAM HART DYKE) (Kent, Dartford): The Fourth Schedule of the Code already makes provision for teaching some of the subjects referred to, to individual scholars; but while I fully recognize the importance of commercial education, and am most desirous to assist its development, the proposal to graft it upon the curriculum of the Science and Art Department opens a very large question, upon which I am not prepared, or, indeed, in a position, to make any definite statement at the present moment.

ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS—CLASSIFICATION.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for War, How, and in what way, will the classification of Army Medical Officers regulate their status on board ship or for choice of quarters?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Medical officers, as I have already several times explained in this House, will be exactly in the same position in respect to all the matters mentioned by the hon. Member as they have hitherto been.

EGYPT—ATTACK ON BRITISH OFFICERS—THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the late affray between British officers and natives in Egypt, If he can yet state what was the Court which tried and punished the natives, how it was composed, and under what authority it acted, and who were the "military warders" who carried into execution the sentences of corporal punishments on the Sheiks and others; if he will explain what is to be the function of the Commission of Officers who are to inquire into the case, and what their powers; who are the offenders who will, if necessary, be punished by them, now that the natives have been already condemned and punished; whether this Commission has power to deal with British officers if they are found to be in any degree in fault; who are the officers named for the duty; and, whether the Egyptian officers are natives, and to what force they belong?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Court in question was constituted by the Egyptian Government under the hand of the Khedive. It was composed of two Egyptian and one English officer—namely, the Mudir of the province, the Egyptian *Procureur-Général*, and Major Macdonald, Military *Attaché* to the British Agency. It was so specially appointed in order to avoid delays, and it had power to carry out such punishments as it might deem fitting. The Court sat on the 30th and 31st of March. It found that two officers being out shooting on the 27th of March, one, who fired at and killed a quail, also struck four or five natives passing at a distance of about 50 yards, one of them bleeding slightly from a wound from a single pellet of shot. Compensation was offered; but the natives closed with the officers, and, assisted by some villagers, seized their guns, one of which went off in the struggle and killed a man. The officers being overpowered, they were bound, plundered, and subjected to other indignities, and their lives actually endangered. The Court sentenced 14 persons concerned in these acts to various punishments of fine, imprisonment, and flogging (nine to the latter). The Commission directed that the sentences of flogging should be carried out by the British military authorities in accord with the Mudir of the province, which was done on the afternoon of the 31st, the punishment being inflicted by English prison warders in presence of a company of the Welsh Regiment, to which the officers belonged, and of the headmen and most of the inhabitants of the villages of the offenders. The Mudir of the province and the Egyptian authorities were also present. In every case the Court was unanimous. Sir Evelyn Baring, before the sentences were carried out, saw the *Procureur-Général*, and was convinced that both he and the Mudir were fully satisfied that the verdicts were just and the sentences not too severe. The officer to whom the gun belonged which went off and killed a native in the struggle has paid £30 to the family of the man, and both he and his regiment were willing to have paid any sum; but the Egyptian authorities considered that this was sufficient. The Commissioners were instructed to inquire into the affair without restriction; but there was no question of the wounding of four natives or the death of another being other than accidental.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL asked, as a supplemental Question, whether it was true, as had appeared in the public Press, that much damage was done to the crops by shooting parties?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON replied that he had received no such information. Sir Evelyn Baring had, however, suggested that officers going out shooting should be required in future to provide themselves with passes.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Would the right hon. Gentleman suggest to the authorities in Egypt that a licence should be taken out for the shooting of natives, in order to promote law and order?

[No reply.]

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND) — THE REV. MATHEW MACAULAY, CASTLEBLAYNEY, CO. MONAGHAN.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Reverend Mathew Macaulay, Presbyterian minister of Castleblayney, in the County Monaghan, has resigned his congregation, of which he has had spiritual charge for upwards of 30 years; whether it has come to the knowledge of the police of the locality that the reverend gentleman was, while driving with his wife in the neighbourhood of Castleblayney last July, attacked by an Orange drumming party, and subjected to gross insults; whether, subsequently to this occurrence on the 11th July, his church was broken into, and otherwise desecrated; whether, in consequence of these occurrences, the then Chief Secretary directed that police protection should be given to Mr. Macaulay; whether a reward was offered for information that would lead to a conviction of the desecrators of the church; whether any prosecution or conviction resulted; whether it has come to the knowledge of the police that any members of the local Orange Society canvassed Mr. Macaulay's congregation, for the purpose of inducing them to refrain from paying him the usual stipend; whether it was in consequence of this that he was obliged to resign, or from what other cause; and, whether the police can give any reason for this alleged combination against the Rev. Mr. Macaulay; and, if not, will he cause them to inquire into, and report upon, all the circumstances of the case?

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.) said, before the right hon. Gentleman answered he wished to ask him a further Question of which he had given him private Notice. It was this—If it was not impossible for a clergyman of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland to resign his charge without the consent of the General Assembly; and was it not the case that the Rev. Mr. Macaulay had memorialized the General Assembly to allow him to resign on the plea of advanced years, being over 70 years of age; that the General Assembly appointed a Commission with power to deal with the Memorial, and that the Commission decided to allow Mr. Macaulay to resign; further, that the major part of the Rev. Mr. Macaulay's income was not derived from stipend, but from a grant out of the Sustentation Fund, and that he still continued to receive such a grant as an aged minister from the funds of the Church?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): In reply to the Question on the Paper, I understand that the Rev. Mr. Macaulay has resigned his charge, and also that he and his wife were attacked by a drumming party, but no injury was sustained by them. The rev. gentleman declined to give the names of the persons who attacked him, and no further steps will, therefore, be taken in the matter Police protection was given to the Rev. Mr. Macaulay at his request. The church was not broken into; but access was gained by means of keys, and orange lilies were tied on the walls. No reward was offered, nor was there any prosecution. The police have no knowledge of any local members of the Orange Society canvassing the congregation for the purpose of inducing them to enter into a combination. As regards that part of the Question which asks whether the rev. gentleman was forced to resign in consequence of that combination, it will be clear from the Question put to me by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Sinclair) that that was not the reason.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say if this was one of the cases of Boycotting referred to in his speech?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As far as I am able to judge there was no case of Boycotting in the matter. I understand the cause of his resignation was because of his advanced age.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, so far from a reward not being offered in connection with the desecration of the meeting-house, a copy of the notice offering a reward was sent to the Constabulary, who refused to exhibit it?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said, he could give no further information than that contained in his answer.

BURIALS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE HAYWARD'S HEATH BURIAL SCANDAL.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to a case, described as the Hayward's Heath Burial Scandal; whether it is a fact, as stated, that the vicar of the parish refused, by order of his Bishop, to inter the body of an old man, on the ground that he had married his deceased wife's sister before a registrar; and, whether the Bishop and vicar were legally justified in the course they took?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): The fact is not as stated in the Question. The vicar of the parish did not refuse to inter the body of the man referred to. He was buried in the parish churchyard by the vicar, who, with the approval of the Bishop and of the nearest relatives of the deceased, used a form of burial service in conformity with the Burials Act of 1880.

CRIMINAL RETURNS (IRELAND)—"MADE AMENABLE."

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, What is the meaning of the term "made amenable" in the Irish Criminal Returns; whether persons arrested by the police and dismissed without trial for want of proof are entered as "made amenable;" and, whether the Government will consider the advisability of discontinuing this term, and showing, 1. Persons apprehended or summoned but not tried; 2. Persons tried but not convicted; and 3. Persons convicted?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Holmes) (Dublin University): In answer to a Question put to me by an hon. Member on a former occasion, I stated that I always considered the term "made amenable" to refer to persons who have been returned for trial, and that it did not include persons brought before magistrates who were dismissed because there was not sufficient evidence. Since then I have had an opportunity of speaking to the Inspector General, who is responsible for these Returns; and I found that my answer was substantially correct, except that, in addition to what I said, the Returns include those persons against whom informations have been laid in the first instance and subsequently withdrawn by the persons who laid them, the parties in consequence not being returned for trial. I feel the desirability of making some alteration in the arrangement of these Returns; and when I have an opportunity of speaking to the officials who have charge of the matter, I will call their attention to the recommendations of the hon. Member with a view to their adoption.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I would like to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman, whether the Returns presented some years ago under the term "made amenable" did not include persons who were arrested and returned for trial by the magistrates, persons against whom no bill was found by the Grand Jury, and persons against whom a *nolle prosequi* was entered by the Crown?

Mr. HOLMES said, he was not aware of that. His answer was confined to the Returns at present before the House.

Mr. SEXTON: Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman know whether there has been any change in the system of classification?

Mr. HOLMES: No, Sir. There has been no change, since I came into Office, in the system of classification.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—H. O'NEILL, BAILIFF AT MITCHELSTOWN.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.) (for Mr. J. O'Connor) (Tipperary, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that O'Neill, bailiff at Mitchelstown, was, on the 25th March, fined 10*s*. by Mr. R. Eaton, R.M., for having assaulted with a pike and inflicted a severe wound on the head of a deaf mute named Looby; whether he is aware that a late Attorney General directed that persons found guilty of this charge should be returned for trial to the Assizes; whether O'Neill rushed through the town of Mitchelstown on the fair day, 25th March, with a naked knife in his hand, and assaulted Mr. W. Casey, and whether Mr. Eaton refused informations to be sworn against O'Neill on that occasion; whether, on 12th March, O'Neill and another bailiff named Davis tried to force themselves into Mr. Casey's shop, who remonstrated with and tried to prevent them from entering, when O'Neill struck Casey with clenched fists; Casey, having retaliated, was summoned to Petty Sessions, and was fined 20*s*. and costs by Mr. Eaton, who dismissed the cross case against O'Neill; whether Mr. James Skinner was also fined in a similar sum, although he produced several witnesses to prove he had only been looking on; whether Mr. Eaton is an extensive land agent; and, whether he will inquire into the above statements regarding the judgments of Mr. Eaton, Resident Magistrate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): O'Neill was fined 10*s*. for assaulting Looby during an affray arising from the action of a riotous mob, of which Looby was a member. No evidence was given that any serious injury was inflicted, and the Resident Magistrate dealt with the case as one of common assault. O'Neill himself was badly beaten, and on the occasion in question he received provocation. I am not aware that a late Attorney General directed that the persons found guilty of this charge should be returned for trial to the Assizes, nor do I see how such a general direction could be given, as each case must be dealt with on its merits. O'Neill appeared to have been set upon by a large crowd, and he pulled out his knife, but did not use it. With respect to the other occasion, O'Neill and Davis had been to a house for the purpose of serving a legal process, when Casey and Skinner assaulted the bailiff, for which they were fined 21*s*., the magistrates expressly stating that they fined them in that amount in order to enable them to appeal if they thought fit. They gave notice of appeal, but subsequently abandoned it. Mr. Eaton does not act as a land agent.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): Is it a fact that O'Neill first struck Casey; and, if so, why was Casey fined and not O'Neill?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As far as I understand, that is not so.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say that driving into a man's house is a common assault?

[No reply.]

THE CURRENCY—FOREIGN BRONZE COINS.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he is aware that, in consequence of the recent notice as to foreign bronze coinage, such coins are being generally refused by tradespeople and others in London and elsewhere; and, whether, in view of the very serious losses and hardships which the poorer classes are likely to suffer from the refusal of this foreign coinage, he will take any immediate steps to meet these losses and hardships, by providing for the exchange of these foreign coins, at a moderate percentage of loss to the holders, through post offices or otherwise?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): As a good deal of misapprehension appears to exist about the recent action of the Government in this matter, perhaps the House will pardon me if I take this opportunity of making a somewhat full statement on the subject. The recent Proclamation with regard to foreign bronze coins only prohibits their importation, and does not affect their circulation in this country. This circulation has, of course, never been legalized; and the Government Departments have never accepted foreign coins, though they have circulated with tolerable freedom from hand to hand, especially in London. The late Government were pressed on several occasions to prohibit the circulation of these coins; but they had no wish to disturb the currency, and declined to take any such action. They found, however, that systematic importations of these coins were beginning to take place; so they took power in the Customs Amendment Act of last year to prohibit such importation by Proclamation. However, there was no time to issue a Proclamation under the Act, for the late Government left Office soon after the Act was passed. The present Government have received many similar representations from various parties as to the illegal circulation of these coins, and the inconvenience resulting therefrom. They felt it, therefore, to be their duty to carry the Act into effect, and the recent Proclamation was accordingly issued. Though the Proclamation is directed only against the systematic importation of these coins, it has, I am aware, had the effect of causing people to refuse to take such coins in the ordinary course of business; and I can well believe that a certain amount of hardship may thus indirectly have been caused to the poor, who may have to a considerable extent these coins in their possession. The Government are most anxious to alleviate this hardship to the best of their ability; and I have carefully considered, in concert with the authorities of the Mint and the Post Office, what course had better be followed. The hon. Member is, no doubt, aware that there is an appreciable profit in putting these foreign coins into circulation in this country, a matter which, of course, must not be overlooked. At the current rate of exchange, an English sovereign will exchange for 252 or more 10-centime pieces, and, therefore, there is a great profit in circulating them, as compared with the 240 pence which the sovereign is worth; there is a profit of 1*s.* on every £1, so that there is about a shilling profit on each pound's worth of these coins put into circulation in this country. The House will, therefore, see at once that it is important to stop the importation of this coin. I understand that fishermen have brought over these coins in their boats from the north of France. I do not know that there has been a regular, systematic importation on a large scale; but the importation has been large, and the amount of coin in circulation at the present moment is very great. If we were to undertake to change these coins, giving 1*d.* for every 10-centime piece, it is clear that it would be an inducement to people to continue the importation, and we should flood the country with foreign bronze coinage; and the Mint, and consequently the taxpayers of the Kingdom, would lose that profit upon the coinage of copper which belongs to every Sovereign Power. I lay it down, therefore, as essential that the importation must be stopped; but what the Government are prepared to do is this:—In order to combine at once the object of relieving the holders of these coins from their difficulty, and at the same time checking the importation, we propose that on and after Monday next these coins should be received in exchange for cash or stamps at any post office at the rate of 13 to the 1*s.*; no quantity less than 1*s.* worth being received. After the 31st of May none of these coins will be received in exchange. The cost of the operation will be very slight to the Exchequer; and I trust that the House will not disapprove of the relief thus given to the holders of these coins under the very exceptional circumstances which I have mentioned.

VACCINATION ACTS—IMPRISONMENT OF JAMES BAMFORD.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the President of the Local Government Board, Whether his attention has been further called to the imprisonment of James Bamford, for non-compliance with the Vaccination Acts; whether James Bamford has again refused to comply with the Act, in respect of the same children; whether the case was again, a few days back, before the Newport Pagnell Board of Guardians, when it was urged that, as he had twice suffered punishment, he might be spared another prosecution; whether the Board of Guardians have resolved, in the words of the Chairman, to "go on prosecuting Bamford till he did obey;" and whether seeing that the present state of the law permits the unrestricted repetition of the penalty of imprisonment in the case of parents who conscientiously object to the risk of vaccinating their children, he will, in the first place, consider the justice of advising the Newport Pagnell Board of Guardians not to press for further punishment of James Bamford, in respect of the same children; and, in the second place, consider the advisability of promptly introducing a measure to remove the grievances of men in Bamford's position, by doing away with cumulative penalties, or otherwise?

The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have no information with regard to the case beyond that furnished by the Question. I have forwarded to the Guardians a copy of the Evesham letter which sets forth the Board's views on the subject of repeated prosecution; but I cannot undertake to intervene in any individual case, nor am I prepared to propose legislation which would take away from the Guardians, who have the advantage of knowing fully the local circumstances, their freedom of action in the matter.

PARLIAMENT — PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—THE POLICE CONSTABLES AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether, in view of the severe winter and long hours, the constables (engaged in and about the House of Commons) will get a week's rest from duty at the end of the Session?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): This is a matter purely for the discretion of the Chief Commissioner of Police; and I am unwilling to interfere with what arrangements he may think proper to make with regard to the holidays of police constables.

Mr. O'HANLON: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman not recommend that, owing to the long hours of the police connected with the House, they should get a week's rest after the Session closes?

Mr. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; I shall not.

CUSTOMS—FREE GOODS TO IRISH WORKHOUSES.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in view of the poverty of the tenant farmers and other taxpayers in many parts of Ireland, he will recommend that all goods upon which duty is chargeable be in future given free to Irish workhouses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): This is a Question which should, I apprehend, be directed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and though I have not consulted with him on the subject, I can conceive there can be very little doubt as to the answer he will give.

Mr. O'HANLON: I will put the Question direct to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

[No reply.]

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—PROHIBITION OF INTERCOURSE.

Mr. P. M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether an order has been issued prohibiting the Irish Constabulary from speaking, under any circumstances, to so-called disaffected persons, especially in the districts of Herbertstown, Hospital, Bruff, and Kilteely; whether any policeman so found transgressing the order is to be immediately reported; whether a list of the leading Nationalists in the various districts has been made out, and a copy furnished to each constable; and, whether a strict watch on the Nationalists is ordered, so as to prevent their influencing the loyalty of the police force of the country?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that there is no ground whatever for any of the statements contained in this Question.

LAND TRANSFER BILL—LAND REGISTRATION IN PRUSSIA.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether, in accordance with the request made on behalf of the Free Land League, the Secretary of State intends, before the Land Transfer Bill is considered in Committee of the House of Lords, to obtain a Report upon the method and operation of the system of land registration established in Prussia by the law of 1872?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): I am not aware that any such wish has been expressed in the House of Lords. If the hon. Member desires it, Her Majesty's Ambassador can be asked to cause a Report to be drawn up on the subject.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—POST OFFICE AT GRANGEGEITH.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that the following gentlemen in the district of Grangegeith—namely, John Duffy, Mountfortun, Slane; Edward M'Kurr, Mulladillon House, Slane; and Edward Horan, P.P., College Hill, Slane, are prepared to guarantee the Post Office against loss in case one be established in the district; is he aware that the people of the district are, and have been paying, out of their own pockets, for these last nine months, 7*s.* a-week to a postman for carrying the letters and the use of his house as a post office, and that the aforesaid postman is prepared to give the accommodation and do the work for the Post Office for the same amount; is he aware that, previous to the present appointment of a letter carrier, some of the people had to go to Slane with their letters, a distance of five and a-half Irish miles, or equal to over seven English miles, to have their letters posted; has his attention been called to the book kept by this postman, which shows that in some weeks over 200 letters, and in none less than 100 letters, passed through his hands; and, whether, in view of the above number of letters, and the distance the people have to go to post their letters, together with the loss and inconvenience to others outside the district, who have frequently to send letters to their friends and customers, he will re-consider his decision, and make more satisfactory postal arrangement for this district?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In accordance with the letter written to the hon. Member by my direction, on the 4th instant, a sub-post-office at Grangegeith, and a delivery 6 days a-week, will be established if the inhabitants of Grangegeith are willing to enter into a guarantee to make good to the Department the excess of cost over revenue, estimated at nine guineas a-year. No intimation, except that conveyed in the hon. Member's Question, has reached me that a guarantee has been offered, but on a written offer being received the matter will be attended to.

Mr. O'HANLON: I have given the names of three gentlemen qualified in every shape and form to guarantee this expenditure.

Mr. RAIKES: I must have their consent in writing.

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)—THE SENTENCE ON ANNIE SHIPTON.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) (for Mr. J. Rowlands) (Finsbury, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether he has obtained the information which will enable him to mitigate the sentence on Annie Shipton?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I have received a Report from the magistrates, and they inform me that they sentenced this woman to a month's imprisonment in the hope that the influence of the chaplain and of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society might be instrumental in helping her to a better life than that which she was leading. I understand that the rector of the parish where she lives is now in communication with the chaplain with a view of ascertaining what can be done for her. On receiving any assurance that steps have been taken to provide for her on coming out of prison, I will advise an immediate remission of the remainder of the sentence.

WAR OFFICE — DEFENCES OF THE EMPIRE—SINGAPORE.

Captain COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the Colony of Singapore has constructed defensive works to the value of £81,000, on the understanding that these works would be provided with suitable armaments by the Imperial Government; whether the medium guns, which have been supplied by our Imperial Government, are 7-inch 6½-ton muzzle-loaders; whether these guns are of the earliest type of built-up Woolwich ordnance; whether experiments have shown these guns to be bad shooting guns; whether considerable difficulty is experienced in providing sufficiently rapid under-cover loading; whether 6-inch breech-loading guns are in course of being supplied as medium guns to Hong Kong; and, whether it is intended to substitute 6-inch breech-loaders for the 7-inch muzzle-loaders at Singapore; and, if so, when?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): As already stated, the Colony of Singapore has practically completed its share of the arrangement, and the Imperial Government will have supplied almost all the guns by the end of the present year. The original Estimate for the guns was £83,700, which has since been increased, in order to provide more effective armament, to £118,000. The medium guns are 7-inch muzzle-loaders of the early Woolwich type. They were already on the spot, and some have been utilized as an auxiliary armament for ranges within those covered by the breech-loading guns, compared to which they are no doubt inferior shooting guns. These guns are placed behind, and fire over, six-feet parapets, which afford a fair amount of protection, and the question of further protection is under consideration. Six-inch guns are in course of supply to Hong Kong; but as Singapore has received four 8-inch breech-loading guns, in addition to the armament originally proposed, it is not considered necessary to add any 6-inch guns.

WAR OFFICE—REDUCTION OF THE ROYAL HORSE ARTILLERY.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the decision, announced in yesterday's papers, as to the reduction of the Royal Horse Artillery, is absolutely final; or, whether he will grant further facilities for its discussion in this House?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir; the decision announced in the papers yesterday is final. The hon. and gallant Gentleman is, no doubt, aware that after the very full discussion which took place in this House on the subject, and after further consideration, I came to the conclusion that one of the batteries then intended to be converted should remain a Horse Artillery battery.

Sir HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN said, in consequence of the somewhat disappointing answer of the right hon. Gentleman, he begged to give Notice that on the earliest opportunity afforded him he would call the attention of the House to the question, in order that the waste of money which many competent judges thought would take place upon this reduction might, if it could not altogether be prevented, be diminished as much as possible.

HOUSE OF COMMONS—BILLS IN PROGRESS IN THE UPPER HOUSE.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the important legislation introduced into the other House of Parliament by Her Majesty's Government, he will take steps to enable Members of this House to obtain copies of Bills in progress through the Upper House?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): As the hon. Member is probably aware, any Member of the House of Commons can obtain a copy of a Bill in progress through the House of Lords by applying at the Bill Office of the House of Lords. The question raised by the hon. Member as to giving facilities for obtaining copies of a Bill before the other House is under the consideration of the authorities.

MERCHANT SERVICE—WRECK OF THE CHANNEL STEAMER "VICTORIA."

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Board of Trade a Question of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether he has received any information as to the disaster to the Channel packet between Newhaven and Dieppe; and, whether an official inquiry will be instituted into the circumstances attending it?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to my hon. Friend, I have to say that the Board of Trade telegraphed to the Brighton Railway Company, and they have received the following reply:—

> "In reply to your telegram, I have received a Report from our agent at Dieppe, in which he states that he believes 14 persons are missing out of about 90 passengers on board the steamship *Victoria*, and one boy of the crew. The bodies of three ladies and one boy have been recovered. The only one as yet identified is that of Mrs. Lacroix, the wife of a fruiterer at Brighton."

There will be an official inquiry.

CRIMINAL STATISTICS (IRELAND)—REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY OF CO. KERRY.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): On Tuesday night the Attorney General for Ireland made use in the debate of an interesting document which had not been laid upon the Table—namely, the Report of an officer of the Grand Jury, I think of County Kerry, and he promised that it should be laid on the Table. I would ask him whether he will take care that that document is in the hands of hon. Members before the closing of the debate on the second reading of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): I will lay the document on the Table in the course of this evening, and take every means in my power to have it circulated before the debate on the second reading of the Bill is concluded.

THE EXECUTIVE (IRELAND)—PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT—APPOINTMENT OF COLONEL KING-HARMAN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether Notice of Motion No. 1, standing to-day in the name of the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman), has been given by the hon. and gallant Gentleman as a Member of the Government; and, if so, under what law the Office he holds is constituted; and whether the acceptance of that Office vacates his seat?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster) was about to rise——

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): May I interrupt the right hon. Gentleman? I was going to ask him by what authority the Office of Parliamentary Secretary for Ireland is constituted; and whether he will lay on the Table of the House any document describing the nature of the duties of the new Office, and the conditions under which it is to be held; whether it is proposed to attach any salary to the Office; and, if not, whether it is contended by Her Majesty's Government that there is a power without limit of constituting unpaid Parliamentary Offices?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I cannot give a full answer to the Question, which involves some legal points; but I may say that there is no salary attached to the Office. The Government have taken every pains to see that the course they have adopted is legal, and they have taken the highest legal advice on the subject.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Is the seat to be vacated?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Will there be some statement laid before the House to show the grounds on which the seat is not to be vacated?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe the grounds are that it is not an Office of profit under the Crown.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I can only say this—that I once had the honour of serving a Conservative Government as Commissioner of the Ionian Islands for a very few days; and under the advice of the Law Officers of the Government, though I received no salary, yet my seat for the University of Oxford was vacated, and I was re-elected. That was in 1859.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I would suggest that the best course would be to put a Question to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England.

MR. SEXTON: What is the title of the new Office?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Assistant Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) said, a Question was asked a few minutes ago as to the title of the new Officer. The Chief Secretary said it would be Assistant Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and then he whispered Under Secretary. May I ask him whether in *The Gazette* it is not given as Parliamentary Under Secretary?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I beg pardon; I believe the right hon. Gentleman is correct.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co. Mid): Arising out of this new appointment, I should like, as I see the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman) in his place, to ask him whether he is a member of the Orange Society in Ireland, as well as of sundry other Protestant Secret Associations?

[No reply.]

Mr. W. H. K. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): May I ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, whether it is not a fact that the newly-appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland was at one time Secretary to the Home Rule League in Dublin?

[No reply.]

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. J. E. REDMOND AND MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): Sir, I wish to ask for the indulgence of the House in order to make a very brief personal explanation. During the course of the discussion upon the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill, numerous references have been made to a speech attributed to me, and which was delivered by me in America in the autumn of last year. And, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), speaking at Ayr, yesterday, repeated some of the quotations which have been made from that speech in the course of the discussions in this House, and also made some others. I therefore ask, with the permission of the House, to make a personal explanation upon the matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, as reported in *The Times* of to-day, has both misquoted and misrepresented what I said on that occasion. There are three quotations which he made from my speech to which, with the permission of the House, I propose to allude. The first quotation is in these words. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Mr. Redmond went on to say:—'We'—that is, the Irish Party in this country—'We are not working for the removal of grievances. We are not simply labouring for the amelioration of the material condition of our people.'"

Now, there are two points, in connection with that quotation to which I wish to direct attention. The first is thather e has been an unfortunate omission of a word. The first sentence ought to read, not that—

> "We are not working for the removal of grievances,"

but it should read—

> "We are not working solely for the removal of grievances."

The second point, which is more important, is this—that the right hon. Gentleman made this quotation as his justification for an accusation against the Irish Party that they did not desire to remove grievances, but rather desired to maintain grievances. Now, what I intended to say, and what I really did say, was simply what we have said here repeatedly, and what is a matter of common knowledge—that is, that the object of the National movement in Ireland is not merely to remove the material grievances of one class—namely, the tenants—but to obtain political reforms for our country also. The second point to which I wish to direct attention is a quotation in which the right hon. Gentleman attributes to me these words—

> "Mr. Redmond is kind enough to tell us, through the medium of his speech to the Convention of Chicago—'I assert here to-day that the government of Ireland by England is an impossibility, and I believe it to be our duty to make it so.'"

That passage has been repeatedly quoted in this House before, and what I have to say in reference to it is this. My words are accurately reported, and I am not inclined to recede, in the slightest degree, from them. All I wish to say is that it is not fair to quote that sentence apart from the context, and for this reason—that the context shows that the government of Ireland by England referred to was that centralized and bureaucratic government of Dublin Castle which we have heard from a high authority is as bad as the Russian government of Poland. The third passage which I propose to read from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman is the one to which I attach most importance. I do not propose to detain the House much longer, and I am grateful for the fair play which has been shown to me. The right hon. Gentleman said "He"—that is myself—said—

"Now what is the one great principle underlying this movement? It is the unqualified recognition of the distinct nationality of Ireland."

And the right hon. Gentleman then says—

"We are told sometimes that Mr. Gladstone's Bill would have been accepted, and was accepted, by the Irish Party as a financial settlement of the Irish Question. That was not Mr. Redmond's opinion. That was not Mr. Redmond's statement to the Convention of Chicago. . . . . 'The principle,' says Mr. Redmond, 'at the back of this movement to-day is the same principle which formed the soul of other Irish movements in the last rebellion against the rule of the strangers. It is the principle which Rob O'Neil vindicated on the banks of the Blackwater, which inspired Wolfe Tone, and for which Fitzgerald and Emmett sacrificed their lives.'"

The right hon. Gentleman goes on—

"That principle may be good or bad; I am not arguing that part of the question at this moment. But what I want to call your attention to is that the object of the Irish Party is to maintain the principle for which Wolfe Tone and Emmett sacrificed their lives—that is, the principle of the independence of Ireland, the entire separation between the two countries."

Now my complaint, Mr. Speaker, is that the right hon. Gentleman—I do not know whether I shall be justified in saying suppressed—but, at any rate, he not only did not give the next sentence, but he omitted the concluding portion of the sentence which he read. I will ask the permission of the House to conclude the quotation, which is as follows:—

"But, consistently with that principle, we believe that it is possible to bring about a settlement honourable to Ireland and England alike, whereby the wrongs and miseries of the past may be forgotten, whereby the chapter of English wrong and Irish resistance may be closed, and whereby a future of freedom and of unity between the two nations may be inaugurated. Such a settlement we believe was offered to us by Mr. Gladstone."

Mr. Speaker, I have nothing more to say. These quotations have been repeatedly made both in this House and outside of it; but I have never had what I was able to regard as a fitting opportunity of explaining and correcting them. Having done so now, I hope that in future hon. and right hon. Members will at least take the trouble to read the speeches which they quote. Sir, I thank the House for the indulgence which it has accorded to me.

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE—PUBLIC BUSINESS.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Could the First Lord of the Treasury throw any light upon the floating report respecting a holiday next week; and would he be kind enough to consider whether it would not be more generally agreeable to go on with the current Business next week, and to take a clear holiday at Whitsuntide of a fortnight or three weeks?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I have certainly no intention of proposing an adjournment of the House next week. I think it would be for the convenience of the House that we should go on with the current Business, and not take the holidays until we have got through with the work in hand.

In reply to Mr. Radcliffe Cooke (Newington, W.),

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster), said: It is not proposed to interfere with the ordinary course of Business on Tuesday and Wednesday next, but to go on with the Motions on the Paper.

WAYS AND MEANS—THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

In reply to Mr. Sydney Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar),

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster), said, he hoped that the Budget would be taken on Thursday next.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[Bill 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [FIFTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to

Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

MR. BAGGALLAY (Lambeth, Brixton): Mr. Speaker, at the commencement of the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland), he made a statement which was received with great satisfaction by hon. Members on this side of the House—namely, that Her Majesty's Government have made no change in their view of this question, and there is not at this moment the shadow of a difference in their mind and opinion with regard to the necessity of pushing forward this measure with all reasonable despatch. Not only was that statement received with satisfaction by hon. Members on this side of the House, but I believe that it will be received with satisfaction when it becomes known throughout the country. Perhaps it was an unnecessary statement to make as far as we are concerned; but there are others in the country who listen to what is said by hon. Members on the other side of the House, and very often to statements of a threatening character. Let me allude particularly to some observations which were made in this House only yesterday afternoon. The hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) referred to the debates which took place on the first reading of this Bill. and he told us that, bearing in mind that the first rule of Procedure occupied five or six weeks, it was impossible to say how long the discussion of the 20 clauses of the Bill would take in Committee. Sir, I see no reason why, if hon. Members on the other side of the House will treat the matter fairly and honestly, and from a due sense of the responsibility which is attached to them, there should be any delay in considering the clauses of the measure and in finally passing the Bill. Of course, I am aware that it is always possible for a Party to use every available means for obstructing the passing of a Bill by employing the rules and Forms of this House for that purpose. I think, however, that hon. Members opposite would be very foolish if they attempted to put in force the very unnecessary threat which the hon. Member for Gateshead has made use of in this early stage of the proceedings. It certainly looks as if he were prepared personally to support some such course if it be inaugurated by hon. Members sitting below the Gangway on the other side. The hon. Member also told us that the course which the Government have determined upon taking is a perilous one and full of danger. We do not disguise from ourselves the fact that our position is a difficult one. We do not disguise from ourselves that any resort to coercive measures in dealing with a neighbouring country is a perilous and highly dangerous course; but that makes it all the more important that we on this side of the House should be firm in our resolution, and that the Government who lead us should let the country know that they have decided upon the policy which they intend to pursue, and that they will pursue it and carry it through to the best of their ability. Now, Sir, this Bill has been denounced in all parts of the country. In particular it was denounced, and not in very choice language, in Hyde Park on Monday last. I imagine that no Bill has ever been brought into this House which has received so many adjectives as this unfortunate measure for the Amendment of the Criminal Law in Ireland. The hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) called it "brutal" and "infamous;" another gentleman, who is not a Member of this House—Dr. O'Connor—called it "a swindle," and its supporters "swindlers." Those expressions, however, were very moderate compared with those which have been used by others. The hon. Member for East Edinburgh (Mr. Wallace) was also moderate, but he was more voluminous. He called the Bill "tyrannical, cruel, needless, revolutionary, anti-English and anti-Scotch." Of course, Sir, such epithets are very easily strung together, and their utterance from a platform is an extremely simple matter — especially in Hyde Park. We have, however, to understand what they mean, and to receive our acceptation they must be supported by arguments which commend themselves to hon. Members in this House. I see the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) in his place. I am glad to see him back again after his short holiday—a holiday which I was sorry to see that he himself cut short by unnecessarily making his appearance upon a waggon in Hyde Park. May I be allowed to tell him that I was in Hyde Park also, although I was not in a waggon. I am prepared to admit that the crowd assembled there was orderly. It has been asserted that there were a great many rowdies present. No doubt, there were; but for a Bank Holiday, and for Hyde Park on a fine day, I think the congregation assembled there was fairly respectable. But, Sir, what did they go there for? A great many were out for a holiday, but I believe that a very large number went there in order to see the Leader of the Liberal Party, or, rather, the real Leader of the Radical Party. I was myself asked over and over again—"Where's Labby?" And there can be no doubt that the point of attraction on Monday was the platform at which the hon. Member for Northampton presided. The hon. Member for Northampton was, perhaps, not so moderate in the language he used in regard to this Bill. He told his audience that the policy of the Government was like the ruffianism of Bill Sykes; and he added that if the Bill ever became law he hoped Irishmen would resist it. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear!] I do not know whether the hon. Member is prepared to repeat those words in the House?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Most unquestionably I repeat them.

MR. BAGGALLAY: Then I am very sorry to hear it. I think that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton was one of the first to denounce the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) when he made use of strong language at Belfast, yet the hon. Member for Northampton now deems it consistent with his position as a Member of Parliament, and the real Leader of the Radical Party, to tell Irishmen that if this Bill is passed and become the law of the land it is the duty of the Irish people to break it. I am very sorry that that should be a doctrine taught by any hon. Member, either in this House or out of it, and I think it is high time that the Bill should be passed. I am of opinion that the course taken by the hon. Member proves only too conclusively the absolute necessity of putting greater powers in the hands of the Executive, in order to enable them to enforce the law in these cases. Other hon. Members have used language with regard to the Bill quite as strong. They have called it insulting and un-Constitutional, and one point which has been specially urged against it is that it is more stringent than any other Bill that was ever passed. Now, Sir, I beg to deny that assertion most emphatically. There is not a single clause in the Bill which has not appeared in some previous Bill. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Yes; that is practically the case; and I would ask hon. Gentlemen to point out how this Bill is more stringent? It is certainly no more stringent than the Bill of 1882; and if hon. Members will refer back to Lord Grey's Bill, which was passed into an Act of Parliament in 1833, they will find, to use the expression of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), that this measure is as "mild as milk" compared with the Bill of 1833. Lord Grey's Bill gave power to the Lord Lieutenant to prohibit any meeting whatever; it is not proposed by this Bill to do anything of the sort. Under Lord Grey's Bill courts martial might be appointed to try, not merely minor offences, but even the most serious offences; such, for instance, as murder—a court martial consisting of nine, or, it might be, of seven officers, the only qualification being that the officers should be of the rank of captain, with a barrister of five years' standing to assist them in their deliberations. A court martial so constituted could try a man for murder. Hon. Members opposite have spoken, in the course of this debate and also in the country, as if trial by jury had never been suspended before. Why, Sir, in that instance the deliberations of a court martial superseded trial by jury, and the court martial itself had power by the votes of a majority to sentence a man to transportation for life. But there were other clauses contained in that Bill. There was the Curfew Clause, which in a proclaimed district required all persons to be in their houses within one hour after sunset. There were other clauses which required householders to give a list of every male person in their houses, and, if necessary, to post up the list on the door, and if a magistrate, accompanied by a police sergeant, chose to go round at any time, he had power to call upon these people to show themselves in order to prove that they were living there, and were then in the house. All these stringent powers were contained in the Act of 1833, and they far exceeded in their stringency any provision of the present Bill. Moreover, there was no appeal of any sort or kind, and, in addition, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. Will any hon. Member say that, after considering the clauses and the provisions of the Act of Lord Grey, he is prepared to come to this House, and speak of the present measure as being the most cruel, the most unconstitutional, and the most stringent against Ireland that was ever brought into the House of Commons? The hon. Member for North Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond), who has to night for the first time explained, or rather amended, the speech he made at Chicago——

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): No; this is not the first time.

MR. BAGGALLAY: The hon. Member, speaking the other night in this House, told us that Boycotting was the same in the autumn of 1885 as it is now. The hon. Member said practically that the state of the country is now just as it was then.

MR. J. E. REDMOND: I said, that in January, 1886, there were 900 persons Boycotted. That was what I was alluding to.

MR. BAGGALLAY: I understood the hon. Member's argument to be this, that there is no more ground for a Coercion Bill now than there was in 1885, and that, practically, Boycotting was not greater in the early part of the present year than it was in the autumn of 1885. His contention was that if we—the Conservative Party—did not bring in a Bill for the amendment of the law, then, why should we do so now? I understood that to be his argument; but I maintain that the fact of the country being in no better position now is the very reason why, so far as Boycotting is concerned, we should amend the law. Can the hon. Member say that it is a satisfactory thing that the Boycotting which existed in 1885 should exist now, and that we should not bring in a Bill to amend the law and put down these grave and serious offences against the laws of society? The point is this—at that time the extension of the franchise had then been given. The Elections were coming on in the month of November, 1885. [*Cheers.*] Hon. Members opposite cheer. At that time we did not disguise the fact that it would have been an insult to the Irish people, at the moment when the Elections were coming on, to attempt to influence those Elections by proposing a Coercion Bill. We thought it was better to wait until an expression of opinion had been given throughout the country after the franchise had been extended and the Elections had taken place. We left the people to the unfettered expression of their opinion at the polling booth. The Government stated then, as they state now, that they were anxious and willing if they could, to govern Ireland according to the ordinary law. We are anxious, at this moment, to govern Ireland according to the ordinary law; but we find that it is impossible. In 1886 a great change took place. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), finding that he was not in the position which he had sought for of being independent of hon. Members from Ireland, took the course which is only too well known now, and which probably he himself regrets. The course he took was to secure to himself a majority in this House by an alliance with the Irish Party. He secured a majority for a few months until he brought in the Bill which ruined his Government, and led to another Election in July, 1886. The right hon. Gentleman broke up his Party when he looked below the Gangway for the Irish Members to help him. Having broken up his Party they defeated him in this House. He then went to the country, and the country confirmed the verdict of the House, in July, 1886, and declared in favour of the Union. It is to maintain that Union that we are now here. The mandate we have received from the constituencies, is the mandate to maintain the Union of the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. That is the mandate which we have, and I maintain that we violate no Election pledges in supporting this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) has recently been in the south of London; but the only South of London Member who appeared on his platform was, I think, the hon. Gentleman who occupied the chair. There are a great number of other Members for South London, but they were not there. The right hon. Gentleman did not find much company on that occasion from the Metropolitan Members, but the right hon. Gentleman, although he knew perfectly well that there are South London Members sitting on this side of the House, and although he took occasion to call attention to the fact that the Metropolitan Members do not act up to the pledges they had made to their constituencies, did not allude to any of us or to any South London Representative. I am not here to speak on behalf of the South London Members generally, I can only speak for myself. I made no pledge to the constituents I have the honour to represent which I am not ready to support in this House. In voting for this Bill, I maintain, emphatically, that I am carrying out the pledges which I gave during the Election, and which I know many hon. Gentleman sitting near me also gave upon their different platforms. In my Election address I stated, and perhaps I may be allowed to quote the words I used—

> "We must give justice to Ireland. It is our duty to govern her as we govern ourselves; to pass good and just laws, and to take care that such laws are enforced."

[An hon. MEMBER: Read on.] I have not got the rest of the address by me; but the hon. Gentleman can read on for himself. I am not afraid of anything that follows. I think I went on to say that I looked forward to great improvements in the Local Government system.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Why should they need it?

MR. BAGGALLAY: But what I maintain is that we have first of all to enforce the law, and that is the sole proposal of the present Bill. We hope that it will be effectual for that purpose. If I did not entertain that hope I should not vote for the Bill. I should not vote for it if I did not feel satisfied—that if it is carried, and if it is resolutely and firmly enforced, it will, in conjunction with the remedial measures which the Government have already brought in, and which will come before this House in due course of time—I would not vote for it unless I felt satisfied that we are doing our best, and I believe we shall be successful in so doing, to restore peace, order, and happiness to Ireland. Now, Sir, a consideration I wish to put before the House with regard to the case for the Bill is—that, in the first place, the Government have before them the Report of their own Royal Commission, and the Report of that Royal Commission is founded upon no small amount of evidence. The Royal Commissioners examined—I do not know how many witnesses in all—but they examined 170 tenant farmers, and I believe that no pains were spared to get really at the bottom of the Land Question, and the causes which affect the happiness and the prosperity of Ireland. The words in which the Royal Commissioners reported upon Boycotting have already been read to the House; but no words could be stronger or more emphatic than the language employed by those who have thoroughly investigated the question. I maintain that Her Majesty's Government are entitled, on that Report alone, to say that the evil requires some immediate action on their part in order that the influence of the Executive may be strengthened. I will not deal further with the Report of the Royal Commission which has already been frequently quoted; but I will pass on to the statistics of crime. Returns have been recently placed in our hands, and from those Returns I find that agrarian outrages, taking the two provinces with which we are practically dealing—namely, the provinces of Munster and Connaught, are as follows:—In Munster in 1884, there were 429 agrarian outrages, and in 1886 they rose to 631, or nearly 50 per cent. In Connaught the agrarian outrages in 1884 were 117, and in 1886 they increased to 223, or very nearly 100 per cent. But, Sir, the most remarkable fact in regard to these statistics is this—although the increase in the number of offences was, in the one case, 50 per cent, and in the other 100 per cent, the proportion of persons brought to justice to the number of cases reported was exceedingly small. In Munster, out of 631 cases, there were only 18 convictions. In 536 cases no one at all was brought to trial. Amongst the cases I find that there were six murders with only one conviction, while in three cases of murder nobody whatever was brought to trial. There were 16 cases of firing at the person, and only one conviction; there were 70 cases of incendiary fires, and not a single person was brought to trial; there were 45 cases of maiming cattle, but no one was convicted, and only one person was brought to trial; there were 67 cases of injury to property, six were brought to trial, and one convicted. In Connaught the figures were very similar. Last night the right hon. Baronet the Member for Clitheroe (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) quoted some statistics in reference to the Irish prisons, and he told us that crime must be going down in Ireland, because there are so few convicted prisoners to be found in those prisons. Why, Sir, that is our case; it is because the prisons are so empty—not that we wish to fill them—but because the people who deserve to be there are not there, that Her Majesty's Government have introduced this Bill. [*Ironical cheers.*] Hon. Members who derisively cheer that remark are probably glad to hear that among these murders, these outrages upon cattle, this firing at persons—the large number of persons who have been guilty of such offences should still remain at large, not only unconvicted and unpunished, but even without having been brought to trial. I can only understand the derisive cheer of hon. Members opposite in that way; otherwise, why do they cheer at all? We have to deal now with the position of affairs which arises from this undetected crime. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, on the 28th of January, 1881, in bringing in one of his numerous Bills for the prevention of crime, used these words—

> "But we have never said that the amount of this crime, taken by itself, was the basis of our propositions. . . . You must consider the amount of crime in conjunction with its source, with its character. . . . What we have founded ourselves upon has been, above all things, the failure of the administration of justice. It is the administration of justice which constitutes the safety of the individual, and which is the true guarantee both of rights and liberties."—(3 *Hansard*, [257] 1,697.)

Sir, that is the position we now take up—namely, that although it is true that there is an increasing amount of crime, still that fact might not alone justify a great and stringent measure. What we say is, that we find an immense amount of undetected crime, and we find, also, that the administration of justice has failed. In the words of the right hon. Gentleman we find, above all things, that there has been a failure in the administration of justice, and that it is the administration of justice which constitutes the safety of the individual, and which is the true guarantee both of rights and liberties. But, Sir, there is a further point to which I desire to call the attention of the House, and it is this—the statements which have been made in this House with regard to the National League. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), in the course of the able speech he made when he introduced this Bill, alluded to the National League, and said that Irishmen were Boycotted for not joining it. The Secretary of the National League, the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington), at once jumped up in his place and challenged the right hon. Gentleman to name a single instance in which the National League had Boycotted anybody for not joining it. That challenge was subsequently taken up by the hon. Member for Cork himself. Speaking either that night, or shortly afterwards, the hon. Member for Cork said—

> "The Chief Secretary was challenged on the spot to give a single instance of pressure being brought to bear on anybody to join the National League throughout the whole of Ireland, but he could not do so. If any such case had occurred that branch would have been dissolved on the spot."

Sir, since that statement was made I have had an opportunity of seeing a large number of paragraphs in newspapers published by the National League in Ireland. Those newspaper paragraphs deal with instances of Boycotting on the part of the National League, and I am in a position to give hon. Members opposite plenty of quotations in reference to cases in which branches of the National League have passed resolutions which amount to Boycotting, and even worse. I propose to read to the House one or two quotations which entirely support the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The Mullinavat Branch of the

National League, at a meeting held on the 9th of January last, and presided over by the Rev. P. Meany, passed this resolution—

> "'He who is not with me is against me.' Applying this test to our organization, we are forced to believe that every man who stands aloof, and assists not morally and materially the National League, is an enemy of that Association. 'Go mark him well.' By the first of next month a list of the members will be printed and published for the information of every person interested. If it be not too much, we invite the attention of merchants and shopkeepers generally to the list."

Let me give another quotation, which relates to the Birr branch—

> "There are a few who have not yet joined the ranks of the League, but who are expected to do so on or before Sunday next. There is now no time for the apathetic. The man who hangs fire this year in in secret alliance with the people's enemies, and the people will know how to deal with him when their ranks are closed in."

I do not know if hon. Members opposite are prepared to say that that is not Boycotting or inciting to Boycott? [*Cries of* "No!"] It is not? Allow me then to give another.

An hon. MEMBER: Those two cases were read yesterday.

MR. BAGGALLAY: I have no wish to read anything which has been read already. I prefer to read others; and I assure hon. Members opposite that I have plenty more. Here is one—

> "Persons not joining before the 15th proximo, will have the questionable honour of seeing their names in print and posted up in conspicuous places throughout this, and neighbouring districts."

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid.): What branch was that?

MR. BAGGALLAY: Sligo.

MR. M. J. KENNY: In what part of Sligo?

MR. BAGGALLAY: At Bunninaddin on Sunday, March the 6th, 1887, at a meeting presided over by the Very Rev. Canon Stenson. I have read the passage from *The Sligo Champion* of March the 12th, this year. I have another here from the Ardee Branch—

> "That the Secretary be instructed to prepare a list of those farmers, traders, and shopkeepers who have, and who have not, joined the branch; the letter to be hung up in the League office, and the former to be placarded through the neighbourhood."

Is that Boycotting? [*Cries of* "No!"] It is not? Then here is another from Aughamore in the County of Mayo—

> "Resolved—'That all subscriptions to this branch be paid in before Sunday, March the 6th, as no cards of membership will be supplied to any person after that date. That we approve of and adopt the resolution put forward by the Bekan branch—namely, That no tradesman work for any person not producing his card of membership.'"

What does that mean? Unless a man can show that he is a member of the League he is not to be dealt with, or to have any work done for him. Is that Boycotting or not? The next one I take from a leading article in *The Sligo Champion*. Perhaps hon. Members will say that the National League is not responsible for any leading article, but this is what the writer says—

> "In Achonry, on Sunday last, printed notices were posted up at Chapel and at other places throughout the parish, setting forth the names of those who in the past year refused to join the local branch of the Irish National League. Great excitement prevailed when some of the *shoneens* saw their names in the black list. Two individuals in particular, one of whom is known as 'Little Mark,' made themselves conspicuous by their eagerness to become members for the ensuing year, and thereby secure themselves from a similar exposure in future. They made the best of their way to the League Rooms, handed in their subscriptions, and retired. They were, however, not a little surprised later on to learn that their money had been refused, and that before it is accepted an apology for past apathy must be made. We commend the action of the Achonry branch to the people of Tubbercurry and the neighbouring parishes."

There is another class of Boycotting which I should like to allude to—Boycotting for a different purpose. I do not know what the "Pay the Members Fund" is. Does it refer to Members of Parliament?

MR. M. J. KENNY: It is Parliamentary expenses.

MR. BAGGALLAY: *The New Ross Standard* of February the 6th, says—

> "The collection for the 'Pay the Members Fund' will be made at the Chapel gates, on Sunday, February the 20th, at the rate of 1*d*. in the pound on the valuation—exactly half of what was given last year."

In point of fact, the National Land League are actually rating persons on their valuation for the purpose of paying Members of Parliament.

AN HON. MEMBER: No; it is a fund to pay election expenses.

MR. BAGGALLAY: If the subscription is not paid, are those who refrain from paying to continue members of the National League, or are they to be put on a list and be posted on the chapel doors, and are the people around to be told that these persons are Boycotted, and that tradespeople and shopkeepers are not to deal with them? There seems to have been another collection made, according to *The Sligo Champion*, towards another fund. At a meeting at Gurteen, held on Sunday, the 27th of February last, with the Very Rev. Canon O'Donohoe in the chair, it was—

> "Resolved—'That a collection for the defence of Messrs. Dillon, O'Brien, &c., be made, during the ensuing week, in this locality, and that not less than 6*d*. be accepted from any person. Anyone not subscribing will be considered not in sympathy with the branch.'"

Are hon. Members still prepared to support what the Secretary of the National League asserted when he got up and interrupted the Chief Secretary, and declared, in this House, that if the right hon. Gentleman would give him a case he would prove that it was not true?

Mr. SEXTON: Will the hon. Gentleman allow me to point out to him that he has not yet given a solitary instance of any case of Boycotting that resulted from these publications?

Mr. BAGGALLAY: The hon. Member seems to think that we are as simple as the Irish people. What is the meaning of a resolution passed declaring that those who have not done a particular thing will have their names posted up at the church doors? What is that done for? Why are the names to be posted up? Why is a resolution passed that tradespeople and shopkeepers are not to deal with certain individuals? If the hon. Member remains in any state of doubt I will give him another case, which I take from *The Carlow Nationalist* of February 26th—

> "At Newbridge, the chairman said a man named John Barnes had just apologised for doing some work—[A Voice: Dirty work]—for some objectionable parties. The man had a family, and was only earning 1*s*.10*d*. a-day, when he was tempted with 7*s*. 6*d*. a-day, which he had not strength enough to resist. However, he now apologised, and sought re-admission to their ranks and favour. It was decided to re-admit him to membership, and the meeting adjourned."

I contend that that quotation proves my case up to the hilt. It shows that persons who have been Boycotted have been compelled to pay high prices in order to induce persons to work for them; and in this case, when a man with a large family, earning only 1*s*. 10*d*. a-day, was tempted by the offer of 7*s*. 6*d*. a-day to work for a person who had been Boycotted by the National League, a resolution was passed directing him to appear before the League, to apologize and to ask for the favour of the League in future. Do hon. Members opposite still deny that Boycotting has not been carried out by the National League?

Mr. SEXTON: Yes; most certainly.

Mr. BAGGALLAY: The hon. Member denies it still. Here is another case which I take from *The Leinster Leader* of Saturday, February the 19th, at a meeting of the Killasmeestia and Knockaroe Branch, presided over by Father Cahill—

> "Joseph Farrell came before the meeting to get the work of two years' Boycotting erased off his shoulders. He explained his conduct, and apologised to the satisfaction of the Committee. The Committee are highly delighted at his restoration into the ranks of nationality, and considers it another victory for the old campaigning plan of Boycotting."

What does that mean? In so many words we are told that by Boycotting this unfortunate man for two years the League at length were able to achieve a victory over him. Does the hon. Member still deny that this branch, at any rate, Boycotted the man Farrell?

Mr. SEXTON: Surely, any branch has just as good a right to exclude a man from membership as a club in Pall Mall.

An hon. Member: I should like to ask what is the course taken by the Primrose League?

Mr. BAGGALLAY: I will not trouble the House with any further quotations. I have only read these passages in order to prove what the real character of the National League is. Be it remembered that that League is supported by an executive, including many hon. Members who sit below the Gangway in this House. They know perfectly well that these things are going on, and I believe that the passages I have read prove the offence of Boycotting up to the hilt. With regard to the Bill now before the House, I contend that it has been grossly misrepresented. The object of the Bill is simply to strengthen the law and not to create new offences. If it did I should not be prepared to support it. The Government have no desire to interfere with public meetings legally held, nor to interfere with the Press properly carried on. The object of the Bill is to enforce the law as it now exists. No one under the Bill will be prohibited from doing anything which he may now legally do either in England or Scotland. Many hon. Members complain—and I admit that it is a fair argument to use—of the provision of the Bill which takes away trial by jury; but I would remind the House that trial by jury is only taken away under exceptional circumstances. As was ably pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) last night, trial by jury has been proved for many generations, and many hundreds of years, to be the best mode of trying questions of fact; but when we find that trial by jury has failed—that it is impossible to obtain verdicts in cases where the evidence is conclusive, because the jurors are afraid to do their duty when they get into the jury-box—then I think we are entitled to support the Bill which has been brought in by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. Trial by jury has been done away with before in exceptional cases, and there is no reason why it should not be done away with now if the necessity is proved. I submit to the House that the necessity has been proved, and that there is ample evidence, not only from the report of the Royal Commission, from the charges of the Judges, from the resolutions of the Grand Juries in answer to those charges, from the statistics of crime, and from the evidence which has been abundantly taken in Ireland with regard to the conduct of the National League—I say that there is ample evidence to establish that case for this Bill, and that it is the duty of the Government to press it forward, and when it shall have been passed to put it in force. With regard to hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, the policy of the Irish Members is to oppose everything and everybody until they get separation. The policy of the Radicals, or some of them, is to support anything and anybody who will help to bring them back into Office; but the policy of this side of the House arises out of the mandate we have received, and the pledges we have made, to see that justice is done to Ireland as well as to ourselves, and above all to see that we maintain the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, giving the Irish people just and good laws, but absolutely insisting on the enforcement of those laws by the Executive Government of the country.

Sir LYON PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): The hon. and learned Member for the Brixton Division of Lambeth (Mr. Baggallay) has chiefly devoted his remarks to Boycotting; but he has failed to tell us how this improper and wicked practice can be dealt with by the Bill before the House. Lord Salisbury has said it is too subtle in its nature to be reached by any form of law. I concur in that opinion, and regret it, because Boycotting, whether practised by the National League or the Primrose League, is a dastardly weapon to use in political warfare. The hon. and learned Gentleman then went on to allude to other Crimes Bills in order to carry out the *tu quoque* argument which has so often been used. He referred especially to the Crimes Act of 1833, which included martial law. That was of a very serious character; but the amount of crime was enormous, amounting to 9,003 cases. If I recollect rightly, the clauses authorizing courts-martial were not brought into operation. The hon. and learned Member coincides with the Government in contending that there is no difference in the conditions under which this Crimes Bill has been brought in and in those of similar Acts which have preceded it, and in some of which the Liberal Governments took the initiative. There is, at least, this one great difference—that Crimes Acts formerly were introduced in years when crime was at a maximum; and that, on the present occasion, this Bill was introduced when crime in Ireland was at a minimum. The Coercion Bill of 1871 was passed when criminal convictions amounted to 2,565 annually; that of 1873 when they were 2,542; that of 1881 when they were 2,698; but now, when this Bill is urged upon the House and the country, the last record of criminal convictions is only 1,573. It is an essential difference that, whereas former Coercive Acts were intended to meet a sudden and alarming outburst of crime, this Bill is to deal with a state of crime the lowest on record since the year 1871, with the single exception of 1878. But this is not the only difference between the conditions under which former Bills were introduced. Parliament has deliberately consulted the people of Ireland by an enlargement of the franchise, and the Constitutional answer of 85 per cent of the constituencies in Ireland is that you cannot govern Ireland by Coercive Acts. This makes a vast difference in the situation, and I refer to it chiefly with the view of reminding the Conservative Party in this House of the wise words of their former Leader, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), in a speech of the 3rd January, 1885—

> "You have declared that the Irish people are perfectly capable of exercising the highest rights and privileges of citizenship, while the renewal of a Crimes Act would declare that the Irish people are perfectly incapable of the lowest and most ordinary duties of citizenship. . . . . All I can say is, that if such an incoherent, such a ridiculous combination of Acts, can be called a policy, then, thank God, the Conservatives have no policy."

The noble Lord, however, in a recent speech at Paddington, gets over this well-expressed opinion by saying that this is not a Coercion Bill, but only a Bill "to carry on the elementary—what I call the alphabetical duties—of government." In 1885 the noble Lord thought that ordinary law—and that is pretty strong in Ireland—was quite sufficient for the alphabetical duties of government; but now he seeks for a much sharper rod to teach the enfranchised Irish people the alphabet of law and order. The noble Lord was not so happy as usual in the reasons for his changed opinions. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) has provided the Conservatives with a better euphemistic name for this offensive Bill, when he called it "an emancipating Bill." To his logical mind, a Crimes Bill requires a large amount of crime for its justification, and as this does not exist in abnormal amount, he feels bound to give the Bill some other name. But as several clauses of the Bill forge new fetters in restraint of liberty, we prefer, on this side of the House, to consider and deal with it as a Coercion Bill. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) is too candid and outspoken to call his Bill by any other name than a Bill for the repression of crime. His case is that ordinary law is not sufficient to deal with crime in Ireland. He does not demand, as on former occasions, for temporary powers to suppress temporary crime; but he asks us to believe that Ireland is so permanently and hopelessly lawless that you must give to the Government of that country exceptional and permanent suppressive laws. Well, that is an indictment of a nation to which you have but lately given the franchise of a free people. Burke said that no man had ever been so clever as to draw an indictment against a whole nation, and with all my respect for the abilities of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, he has not succeeded where others have failed. His indictment against Ireland in favour of permanent coercion law is an indictment by anecdote of special cases of crime. Very wisely he said that he would not rest his case on statistics, which the hon. and learned Solicitor General (Sir Edward Clarke) described as "mere unintelligible details." But let me recommend to the attention of the House, not a detailed statement of crime in Ireland, but a general plain account of it in the last published Report of the Judicial Statistics, issued on the authority of the Government. It is very short but very instructive. It will be found at page 15—

> "The improvement as regards the most serious offences (those not determined summarily), noted in the Reports for the last five years, has been more than maintained, the number of offences coming under this category not amounting to 60 per cent of the corresponding number for the year ending 1881, since which year there has been an uninterrupted decline."

This is not an "unintelligible detail," neither is it one to state that so far from Ireland being hopelessly lawless, that a single generation, from 1855 to 1885, has been sufficient to reduce the convicts in the prisons in Ireland by 80 per cent. These facts do not show a lawless population, and, certainly, the continuous progress in the lessening of crime for a whole generation, cannot be attributed to the sporadic action of the League. All this may be, and is true in regard to crime in Ireland, nevertheless it may be so rampant as compared with other parts of the United Kingdom that exceptional coercive laws may be justified for Ireland which would not be tolerated in Great Britain. I have beside me complete Returns of convicted crimes for the whole of the United Kingdom since 1871; but I will only state the relative position of crime in England, Scotland, and Ireland for 1885. In that year, which is a fair sample of the whole—Ireland had 38 per cent less convicted crimes than England, and 47 per cent less than law-abiding Scotland. [An hon. MEMBER: Juries will not convict!] Of course, I expected that interruption. It is quite true that comparisons between Great Britain and Ireland are not conclusive, if, in the latter, there is a large amount of undetected crime or a small proportion of convictions to indictable offences. No doubt, there is much undetected crime in Ireland owing to two causes: the inefficiency of an armed Constabulary as a detective police, and the indisposition of the people to give information in regard to agrarian crime. The 1st clause of the Bill deals with the latter difficulty, and appears to me to be a useful addition to existing law. The difficulties of securing convictions from juries are certainly serious obstacles to the maintenance of law and order. Even in cases of revolting crimes, the juries have sometimes refused to convict. If this state of things existed to any large extent, I admit that there would be a strong argument for the amendment of the criminal law. But to what extent does this failure of justice occur? To a very trifling extent as compared with crime generally. In Great Britain, the convictions for indictable offences are 77 per cent; in Ireland they are 73 per cent. It is not many years since the convictions of Great Britain were only 68 per cent; but they have gradually risen, and, even now, Ireland only lags 4 per cent behind the highest point which we have attained in this country. There is nothing in this difference of a magnitude to justify Parliament to alter the whole jury system, and to deport criminals from Ireland to England. I have used the statistics of crime which the Chief Secretary for Ireland declined to use, and I contend that they give no support to his indictment, that Ireland is so permanently and hopelessly lawless that you are bound to pass permanent coercive laws. As it is impossible to quote the crime of Ireland as a whole in justification of any exceptional measures, the Government fall back on one single section of crime, and base their justification on agrarian outrages, the outcome of bad agrarian laws. The right hon. and learned Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) even limited this charge, and said that he applied the accusation to only a few parts of Ireland, and he instanced the County of Kerry as a justification for the Bill. Kerry is unhappily a county with many agrarian outrages; but it affords no justification whatever for the Bill introduced early this year; because, in the half-year ending 31st December, 1886, there were 75 outrages; whereas in the half-year of 1885, when the Government thought coercion unnecessary, Kerry had 120 outrages, or nearly double the number. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary has a stronger case when he tells us that in the first quarter of this year, agrarian outrages all over Ireland showed a marked increase. That is a very unhappy outcome of the action of a resolute Government. The Liberal Government holding out the hand of conciliation to Ireland, left the Conservative Government with a rapidly declining calendar of agrarian outrage. In the last quarter of the year, there was not one case of murder or manslaughter; and of all kinds of agrarian outrages there were only 94 cases, excluding threatening letters. Now, the right hon. and learned Gentleman tells us that in a single quarter agrarian outrages have increased more than 80 per cent. If that be true, should it produce no misgivings in the mind of the Irish Government? Instead of a message of peace, you have sent one of defiance to Ireland by the measure of coercion, and the result is a very melancholy one; but it is not a justification for coercion. If the threat of coercion manufactures crime, it is far better to depend upon the conciliation which extinguishes it. The state of crime in Ireland is not, then, the justification, and perhaps not even the motive for this Bill. What is, then, the motive of the Government in introducing it? That was explained to us some nights since, in the clear language of the hon. and learned Solicitor General for England. As usual with the hon. and learned Member, his language is lucid and unmistakeable. I urge the House to listen to his explanation. He was speaking of the influences exercised by the National League, and proceeded to say—

"Those influences are using the undoubtedly real sufferings and troubles of the Irish people as an excuse for agitation, and as a weapon with which they may obtain their own ends; and it is with those influences that the Government are endeavouring to cope by means of this

Bill. [*Cheers and eounter cheers.*] I am very glad that the definition of the issue which is raised between us is accepted by both sides of the House."

That, then, is the main motive of the Bill. The Government must accept this simple issue, because it was reiterated only yesterday by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) in equally clear language. He said—

> "The Government announced clearly at the General Election that they felt it their duty to suppress the National League and to put an end to the existing state of disorganization in Ireland; so that, on the one hand, the present policy of the Government, and, on the other, the granting of Home Rule were plainly before the country, and the country decided against Home Rule. . . . . The object of this Bill and of the remedial measures of the Government was to convince the people of England that Ireland was not ungovernable without a separate Parliament and Executive."

That is plain speaking, and we, on this side, accept the issue. At the last Election, we also told the constituencies that there was only one alternative to Home Rule, and that was coercion. The 6th and 7th clauses are the main object and purpose of this Bill to crush that national association which exists for the purpose of obtaining Home Rule for Ireland, and which you believe will conquer your policy unless you suppress it. The Bill means — "Home Rule, never—Coercion for ever." The Attorney General for Ireland wishes us to read "for ever" the words, "as long as it is necessary." That means, I presume, that if you succeed by coercion in stamping out the national aspirations of Ireland, coercion will be no longer necessary. The whole pith, purpose, and strength of the Bill rest in two clauses which deal with dangerous association, and in the 2nd clause, which attacks combination. The 6th clause certainly limits dangerous associations to those which have some taint of crime; but the next clause enables a high political officer—the Lord Lieutenant—to be the only judge whether an association interferes with the administration of law or the disturbance of order. No need to wait for the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant to tell us that the National League is a dangerous association aimed at by this clause, for the Secretary of State for the Colonies has told us that already. The Attorney General for Ireland told us that no names of assotions were used, because they might change their names; and the hon. and learned Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) yesterday gave us a definition of the object of this clause in saying, "That Irish politics had become corrupt, and that they must become purged of crime." That is all very well, when you really mean crime which a Court of Law and a jury declare to be crime; but that term is to be interpreted by a political Lord Lieutenant, an executive officer who creates and proclaims the crime as one which interferes with his administration of law. No political associations for Home Rule could exist under such a clause in Ireland. It all comes back to the two alternatives—Coercion or Home Rule. Though I believe that the repression of a political organization under the name of a dangerous association is the chief object of this Bill, there is another purpose also—the repression of combinations which, whether legal or illegal now, will be made illegal by the 2nd clause of the Bill. Combinations of tenants under any form to obtain reduction of rents could scarcely escape from the close meshes of this net. Such combinations have produced results which, in themselves, were not unreasonable, and which were in other cases attained by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) by a process which he defined, as taken by the Government, "in putting pressure upon the landlords within the law." The Plan of Campaign has been declared to be outside the law; but still the results obtained from it were reasonable and not oppressive, unless you choose to say that reductions of 15 to 20 per cent in rack-rents in these bad times are unreasonable and oppressive. What the tenants had to fight against by such combinations is well described by Mr. McCarthy, who acted in a judicial capacity under the Act of 1881, and who is one of the two Commissioners under Lord Ashbourne's Purchase Act of 1885. I quote two answers only from the evidence given by him before the Cowper Commission. In answer to Question 2,268, he says—

> "Looking at the matter as a Judge administering the Land Act in Mayo, in Kerry, and in Clare, I found rack-renting to prevail to an extent that I confess was simply shocking;"

and, in a few questions afterwards, he

is asked, by Lord Milltown, in regard to the combinations promoted by the National League—

> "But, generally speaking, you do not apprehend that there is any serious combination? Quite the contrary. So far as I can gather, the operations of the Act have been fairly facilitated by organizations on both sides. . . . Any interference that occurred appears to me to be reasonable and proper."

And yet, with such evidence as this, we are asked to give powers to a Government, supported by and under the influence of landlords, which may enable them to suppress all combinations for the reduction of rents. I, for one, am not prepared to give the Government powers which would enable them to put the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) in prison, with six months' hard labour, for doing that by combination which the Government itself did against landlords through the pressure of its agents. How can you expect the ignorant tenants of Ireland to differentiate between the action of the Government in mitigating the injustice of a bad agrarian law, and the action of the hon. Member for East Mayo in effecting the same result? Do you think that the tenants of Ireland will love law more because you imprison men who are looked upon as their real benefactors? You denounce the Plan of Campaign as being both illegal and immoral, and I do not deny that it is illegal, and I think it could readily lapse into immorality. Though the Plan of Campaign in its results has hitherto caused little pressure upon landlords which could be deemed excessive, that has wholly depended upon the manner of working it. The Plan has been pronounced illegal, and in its very essence it contains, as I think, what scientific men would call the potency of immorality. If by this Bill you prevent that combination from being headed by men of prudence and sagacity, it will go on in secret and dangerous courses, which will defy a much stronger Bill even than this to put down. Trade combinations, you say, are not stopped by this Bill; but I do not see how they could survive in open day under it. But secret combinations will continue, and the banding of tenants to exact their own conditions of rent, under no restraint of prudent leaders, will convert the potential energy of immorality involved in the Plan of Campaign into actual energy of a very dangerous character. The Bill will, no doubt, cope with the Plan of Campaign; but it will simply do so by converting an open war into a secret irresponsible war against the Government. We have ample experience of the working of Coercion Acts. In the last 100 years there have been upwards of 130 Acts of this kind, 86 of them since the Union, and Ireland is not pacified. It does not require this long list of melancholy failures to convince us that laws which are not supported by the loyalty and consent of a people cannot command permanent obedience. Laws to be permanent and secure must rest upon a sense of right and justice. You do not claim these attributes for the agrarian laws of Ireland; because you tell us that your desire for this Coercion Bill is that you may be able to introduce new measures for making these laws more equitable and humane. Since 1845 we have been constantly endeavouring to amend these laws, and the unvarying result of our legislation has been either partial or complete failure. The cause of failure is that we attempt to legislate for Ireland according to English ideas, under a cloud of English ignorance in regard to Irish wants and Irish sentiment. Our measures are often framed in a spirit of conciliation and benevolence. Thus when the Irish were starving in the Potatoe Famine of 1846, we gave the starving tenants a right to relief from the poor rates. And what was the consequence of our benevolent ignorance? That 160,000 persons were evicted, and that the deaths in Irish workhouses alone, week for week, equalled the mortality of the whole of London. The memories of these evictions when so many owners of land renounced the duties attendant on possession, and disregarded the claims of humanity, cling to Ireland still, and are the cause of our present difficulties. Undeterred by our terrible failure, this House passed the Encumbered Estates Act, most wise and benevolent also in its purpose. But here again we forgot to protect tenants' improvements, or rather we passed them over without any consideration to the new purchaser; and we took no steps to prevent increase of rent, and so our wise and benevolent Act aggravated the evils which it intended to remove. All our recent land legislation has suffered from our ignorance of Irish wants, and from our refusal to be guided by the Representatives of the people. And now the Government which has introduced a new Land Bill into "another place" are between the devil and the deep sea. The landlords dislike it, and the tenants distrust it, even though you are following in part the advice which we, on this side, neglected, when the Irish Nationalists desired us to include leaseholders in our Land Bill, and when you are now trying to mitigate the cruelties of evictions which you denied altogether last autumn; yet all past experience points to your measure as another in the long list of failures. All the Unionist writers—Dr. Beaumont, Lecky, Froude, and even Dicey—agree on two points—first, that English legislation and English government have resulted in incessant failure as regards Ireland; and, secondly, that there has been long-continued misery among the Irish people governed by our laws. Still, the present Government believe that they can continue with success on the old weary treadmill. The Liberal Party have abandoned this belief, and are animated by convictions as earnest and conscientious as your own. They see in the Union, as it exists, no unity —I mean such unity as is described by Milton—

> "In unity defective; which requires
> Collateral love and dearest amity."

It is in this belief that we support the Amendment against the Bill which we think will increase disorder in Ireland. We believe that true Union can only be attained by allowing the Irish to govern themselves under institutions suitable to their national aspirations, their habits—their prejudices if you will—but in close Union with Great Britain as an integral part of the Empire, so that we may aid them in the process of their development, and protect them in the hour of danger.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, there was nothing more remarkable than the greatness and the extent of the change which had taken place in the opinions of right hon. and hon. Gentlemen on that subject, and the short time that had elapsed since they expressed views altogether at variance with those which they now entertained. How long ago was it when those whom right hon. Gentlemen now called "leaders prudent and wise" were denounced by them as "rebels steeped to the lips in treason?" The issue before the House had been referred to by the last speaker. That issue was between the preservation of law and order, accompanied by an attempt to remedy the grievances which Ireland suffered under, and Home Rule. He denied that the issue was between coercion alone and Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), who had just sat down, appeared to think that if a separate Parliament were granted to Ireland there would never be any further need for coercion; yet the right hon. Gentleman's own figures proved the futility of his argument, for he had shown that when Ireland did possess a Parliament of her own a number of Coercion Bills were passed. He utterly denied that the Home Rule scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) would in any way have put an end to the difficulties with which they had to contend now; on the contrary, he maintained it would have aggravated them tenfold. His own opinion was that the scheme itself would not be accepted even by the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, except as a step towards that separation and complete independence which their Leaders had again and again stated was the ultimate goal of all their aims. While it was quite possible that no Bill might have been rendered necessary under those circumstances directed against the policy of the Party led by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), one thing he (Mr. Ritchie) was very certain about — namely, that under it coercion would have had to be applied in a most drastic form, directed not against the law-breaking or disloyal people of Ireland, but against the law-abiding and the loyal. But however that might be, he was quite content to know that the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was put in all its entirety before the constituencies and by them rejected. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) demanded a further appeal to the constituencies on the ground that the alternative of coercion was not put before the constituencies at the last Election. He (Mr. Ritchie) had, however, a vivid recollection of seeing, in his own constituency at least, the bills of his opponent placarded about the walls of the place, in which it was prominently held up that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian desired to extend to Ireland the hand of peace instead of the chain of coercion. Still, if it were necessary now to appeal to the constituencies — which he did not at all anticipate it would be—he should not have the slightest hesitation about it, and would have the greatest confidence that the result would be quite as good, so far as the Conservative Government was concerned, as it was at the last Election. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was quite sure of what the result of his appeal to the constituencies would be. [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Never.] Did the right hon. Gentleman not tell the House of Commons, prior to the last General Election, in tones of the most magnificent eloquence, that the ebbing tide was with his opponents, and the flowing tide with him? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax said that the people would not back the policy of the Government; but his own conviction was that the only policy the constituencies would back would be a policy of firmness and determination in asserting the supremacy of law and order in Ireland. It would not back any policy which showed a weak and vacillating front to those who were endeavouring to make Ireland ungovernable. The policy of the Government, aiming as it did at the restoration of law and order, and the remedying of genuine grievances, was a policy of conciliation; it was in no sense a policy of coercion. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen who laughed were past masters in the art of coercion. If it was coercion it was the coercion of the law-breaking, not of the law-abiding population. There had been a good deal of misrepresentation as to the scope of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) made a speech the other night in South London. For his (Mr. Ritchie's) part, he was one of the admirers of the right hon. Genman. He stood in an altogether different position from most of his Colleagues, and terms that might freely be applied to right hon. Gentlemen beside him would not be justifiable as applied to him. But the right hon. Gentleman was hardly fair in some of his observations in South London as to the scope of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman, speaking of 1819, quoted Tierney in the House of Commons as follows:—

> "I see on the part of the Government an evident determination to resort to nothing but force, they think of nothing else; they dream of nothing else; they will try no means of conciliation, they will make no attempt to pacify and reconcile; force, force, force, and nothing but force."

Then the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I commend these words to you because they exactly describe the policy now about to be pursued in Ireland."

The right hon. Gentleman did not tell his audience that those words did not apply to Ireland at all, and it might have been as well if he had done so, seeing that he was using an illustration of what occurred some years ago with reference to coercion.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said, he had quoted the words as from Tierney.

MR. RITCHIE said, that the audience the right hon. Gentleman was addressing was probable hardly capable of realizing what the exact reference was. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] At any rate, it was true that the words did not apply to Ireland; and at that time it was stated in the House of Commons that Ireland had never experienced a greater degree of tranquillity and, he might add, prosperity, than at that moment. Tierney's main objection when he was making that speech in reference to seditious meetings in England was, that the policy of the Government was simply a policy of coercion, unaccompanied by any attempt to remedy evils. He said—

> "When the noble Lord mentioned that he should open a whole system, he had flattered himself that part of the system would be conciliation. It was now seen, however, that nothing but rigour and coercion were to be resorted to. . . . New laws were to be invented to put them down, and none of their grievances, whether real or imaginary, should receive a moment's attention. . . . Attention ought to be paid to this point—whether some course of conciliation might not be adopted, whether steps ought not to be taken to satisfy the people, and to prove that while the House was willing to repress sedition, it had a fixed determination to listen to their grievances, and, as far as possible, to apply a remedy."

Tierney's whole objection to coercion,

therefore, was because it was unaccompanied by any attempt to remedy grievances. The right hon. Gentleman could not fairly and properly say that with reference to the Government's proposals. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain) say, with reference to the Government's remedial legislation? He said, speaking of the Land Bill, that—

> "It is a Bill that will make an unjust eviction impossible. It is the most generous offer that has yet been made by any Government, Tory or Liberal."

But perhaps he could give an authority of more weight with hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite. Mr. O'Brien, the proprietor of *United Ireland*, said, with reference to the same Bill—

> "If I were a landlord, I should look upon this Bill with greater terror than the tenants could possibly regard the Coercion Bill. It is a greater blow at the landlords than the Plan of Campaign."

He (Mr. Ritchie) did not at all endorse that view, but it was a very striking remark for a gentleman of the political opinions of Mr. O'Brien to make, and showed that he, at any rate, regarded it as a very large boon to the tenants. He knew quite well that hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite did not want remedial legislation. They did not want to have grievances removed. They wanted Home Rule. Ireland peaceful and contented under an Imperial Parliament was the last thing they wanted. They wanted—and he was sorry that they were supported by right hon. Gentlemen opposite—it to be said that Ireland was ungovernable by an English Parliament. The greatest misfortune that could befall them would be that the present Government should show that they could so legislate as to put an end to the grievances of the Irish people. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle had alluded to trade unions. There was nothing the working men were more sensitive about than their trades unions, and trades unionism did a great deal for this country. The interest of their unions were very dear to the hearts of working men, and the right hon. Gentleman could not have touched on a point that more closely affected working men. That ought to have made the right hon. Gentleman extremely careful in what he said. The right hon. Gentleman alluded to trade unionism in the following terms—

> "Depend upon it that though the Bill says that no provision in it is to affect the freedom of trade unions, or any trade union in operation, the Bill will exceedingly affect the principles of trade unionism. And I say, how would you like to have legislation of that kind applied in London? If this Bill were extended to the Metropolis it would be in the power of somebody corresponding to the Lord Lieutenant —(A voice, 'The Lord Mayor.')—The Lord Mayor, think of that, gentlemen, think of the Lord Mayor having it in his power to suppress a trade union and to declare it an illegal combination, because he thought it fatal to law and order and to the maintenance of the administration. (A voice.—'Let them try it on.') But they will not try it."

If he were a working man he should regard this analogy between the combinations against which this Bill was directed and trade unionism, as one of the greatest of insults that could be offered to him. A trade union was placed upon a legal basis. [An hon. MEMBER: Since when?] Since when, and by whom? It was placed upon that basis by Mr. (now Lord) Cross in 1875. There was nothing the working classes were more grateful for than for their unions being placed on a firm and sound basis. Trades unions were for strictly legal purposes, and to compare these legal organizations for trade purposes to the illegal combinations against which this Bill was directed, was a gross insult to the trades unions of the country. He challenged the right hon. Gentleman to point to the clauses of the Bill that would affect trades unions. The right hon. Gentleman knew there was not a single one. But over and above that, it did not lie within the unrestricted power of the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim a dangerous association, even if it fell under one of the categories named in the Bill. If he thought that an association came within that term and proclaimed it, the Proclamation must be at once laid on the Table of the House, and if Parliament was not sitting it must be summoned for the purpose of considering it. If Parliament refused to assent to it, of course the Proclamation would lapse and the power cease to exist. He maintained, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman did not exhibit his usual fairness when he appealed to a working class audience in South London, and aroused their passions against the Bill by making a comparison between, and saying that these dangerous associations and trades unions might be treated in the same way. There was no shadow of foundation for such a statement. Another statement made by the right hon. Gentleman was as follows:—

> "We say to them that Ireland has never been for many years more free from crime than to-day. 'Oh! but,' they say, 'there is a terrible latent malady.' It is as though a doctor should visit somebody, and the patient should say to him, 'Well, my temperature is perfectly normal, my pulse is regular, my appetite is excellent, and I sleep perfectly'; and the doctor should reply, 'Ah! but you have a deep-rooted latent malady, and I insist upon your taking my drug.'"

It might be true, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said, "wherever, in 1881 agitation went, want and crime dogged the footsteps of the League," and that "it is not so now." Well, it was quite true that when the hon. Member for East Galway (Mr. Harris) visited Ireland and addressed meetings of Irish tenant farmers now, he did not leave behind him the bloody trail which once followed in his footsteps. Formerly, the hon. Member said—

> "If the tenant farmers of Ireland shot down the landlords like partridges in September Matt Harris would never say a word against them."

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) said, he rose to Order. He wished to ask the Speaker whether the right hon. Gentleman was in Order in attributing to a Member of the House that "he left a bloody trail behind him."

Mr. SPEAKER said, he understood that the right hon. Gentleman was quoting some expression which was used by the hon. Member for East Galway.

Mr. RITCHIE said, that that was so; at the moment of the interruption he was quoting the hon. Member for East Galway's own words. The hon. Member for West Cavan (Mr. Biggar) no longer told the tenantry of Ireland that "the Land League does not recommend the shooting of landlords for a great variety of reasons." The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian told them that Ireland was so free from crime in consequence of the alliance between the hon. Member for Cork and his Party and the Liberal Party. The right hon. Member for Halifax said on Tuesday that he was proud of that alliance. He was bound to say he saw very little to be proud of in the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and those who followed him, surrendering their opinions and throwing themselves into the arms of the hon. Member for Cork and his Followers. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian and his Followers were now prepared to call patriots those whom they had regarded as being little less than rebels. Was the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle's account of the state of Ireland justified, and had Ireland never been more free from crime for many years than to-day? Was the temperature of Ireland normal? The Government had never denied that as far as ordinary crime was concerned Ireland had a record of which she had every reason to be proud. But what were the facts with reference to agrarian crime? Yesterday a Return was presented which was moved for by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle himself. It showed that in Connaught in 1886 the amount of agrarian crime was 50 per cent greater than in 1883, 100 per cent greater than in1884, and 50 per cent greater than in 1885; while in Munster it was 50 per cent greater than in 1883, 50 per cent greater than in 1884, and 20 per cent greater than in 1885. No doubt threatening letters were included in these Returns; but, looking to the fact that there had been a constant decline in the number of threatening letters, the result followed that the excess of aggravated agrarian crime in 1886 over the years he had quoted was not sufficiently stated by the figures he had given. It was not, however, the mere increase of outrages on which the Government based their Bill. There had been an absolute breakdown of the machinery of law and order in Ireland. The law of the land had been supplanted by the law of the National League. The League tried and punished those who offended against their law—by paying their rents, by giving evidence for the Crown, by being on a jury which convicted a prisoner, or by refusing to join the League—those were the "criminals" whom the League punished. The punishment was Boycotting, and very few people in this country could at all realize what the life of a Boycotted individual was. After the illustrations given by his hon. Friend who had spoken earlier in the evening, some idea might be formed of the position of such persons. Again and again resolutions of local branches of the League were published, stating that those who did not join the League would have their names placarded all over the district. The object of such notices was very plain; the persons whose names were published would be Boycotted; they were deprived of earning their bread; if they had money they were deprived of the opportunity of buying bread; their children could not go to school, and they were not spoken to by former associates. Such sentences as those inflicted by the Land League under the name of Boycotting were absolutely intolerable, and almost impossible to realize. It was that kind of thing, and not outrage altogether, that paralyzed the law. It was the supremacy of the Land League that the Bill of the Government was levelled at, and they were determined, if possible, to alter the existing state of things. Another argument against the Bill was one which was used the other day by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. He said—

> "Is it your intention to invite Parliament deliberately and systematically, under a representative system and in a free country, to govern Ireland in defiance of the sentiments of the vast majority of those whom she sends to represent her?"

The Government recognized the enormous difficulty which lay in their path in consequence of the alliance of a number of English and Scotch Liberals with the Party of disorder; but the Government were not dismayed. The Opposition could be weighed as well as counted; and he would like to know how many of those 170 English and Scotch Members who were now following the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, would not have cheerfully followed him if he proposed legislating in an exactly opposite direction to that he now favoured. The right hon. Member for Halifax said there was no reason why the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian should not see the error of his ways, and then he added plaintively—"But it does not follow that we did not see it too." Of course, he would have been ready to see anything the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian pointed out to him. The House would remember a well-known passage between Hamlet and Polonius, which seemed, not inaptly, to illustrate the situation he had referred to—

> "Hamlet.—Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?
> Polonius.—By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.
> Hamlet.—Methinks, it is like a weasel.
> Polonius.—It is backed like a weasel.
> Hamlet.—Or, like a whale?
> Polonius.—Very like a whale."

That seemed to him to be the position of the great majority of the 170 right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who were prepared to follow the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian—they were prepared to see anything which the right hon. Gentleman showed them. One matter ought to be considered in connection with the change in the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman and his Followers. Under what circumstances did it take place? In 1886 the right hon. Gentleman did not see anything wrong in proposing measures in defiance of the opinions of the vast majority of the Representatives of the Irish people, because he told the House that he had prepared a Bill re-enacting the principal clauses of the Coercion Bill which was about to expire when he left Office. At that time the franchise was extended to Ireland, and it was perfectly well known that the hon. Member for Cork would at the next General Election have at least 80 followers. Yet those clauses were to be re-enacted—

> "In defiance of the sentiments of the vast majority of those whom Ireland sends to represent her, in defiance of her representative system."

Not only did the Liberals propose to re-enact those clauses, but they denounced the Conservative Government for not doing so. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian did not have very much respect at one time for the Representatives who came from Ireland, or for the opinions they expressed, for at Leeds on October 7, 1881, he said—

> "Mr. Parnell's doctrines are not such as really need any considerable ability to recommend them. If you go forth upon a mission to demoralize a people by teaching them to make the property of their neighbours the objects of their covetous desire, it does not require superhuman gifts to find a certain number of followers and adherents for a doctrine such as that."

What was true of the followers of the hon. Member for Cork in 1881 was equally true of them now, for the doctrine preached by the hon. Member for

Cork in 1881 was precisely the same as he had preached ever since. Again, in 1885, the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian appealed to the people of England and Scotland to give him such a majority as would enable him to set at nought the views of the Irish majority, which he then knew would be eight-tenths of the Irish Representatives. They had further warning as to what was likely to happen if a preponderating number of Irish Members were to be returned to Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), speaking at Lowestoft on December 7, 1885, said—

> "The Tories had won a few boroughs by the help of their Fenian allies in Lancashire."

Mark the word "Fenians" before the General Election, afterwards it was "patriots"—

> "What would be the future course of public affairs? It was possible that if the Tories got every Parnellite vote in every division they might have a majority of something under a dozen. But was the country likely to tolerate such a combination as that? It was utterly impossible that it could do so. For his part, he desired that for a few months the Tories should stew in their Parnellite juice until they stunk in the nostrils of the country. Upon this combination the Tories still counted to enable them to remain a few months in Office, but even if they did continue in Office, their Government would not be the Government of Lord Salisbury, but the Government of Mr. Parnell. The Tories would have to consult Mr. Parnell upon every question of administration at home and abroad; they would have to ask him what was to be done in Ireland—for the Executive Government of Ireland was now, in fact, in the hands of Mr. Parnell. It was upon such lines as these that Lord Salisbury was going to conduct the affairs of the British Empire; but it was impossible that such a course could long receive the approval of the British people."

If they now used the word Liberal instead of Tory, and Gladstone instead of Salisbury, they would have an exact description of the position. The Liberal Opposition was absolutely and entirely in the hands of hon. Members below the Gangway. When anything had to be done they had to consult the hon. Member for Cork. It was very easy to see how it was that "rebels" before the Election became "patriots" after it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had ceased to be Prime Minister. Now the Followers of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had to pay the penalty of their alliance with the hon. Member for Cork. With the facts staring them in the face, what weight should they give to the change of opinion on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and of hon. Members opposite who followed him? It was not a change from conviction; they had not arrived by slow and painful argument to the conclusion they had. They had been brought to that conclusion simply and solely because they knew that without the help of hon. Members below the Gangway, whom they at one time denounced as "traitors," and now called "patriots," it was impossible for them to hope to again wield the reins of power. Under those circumstances they were quite justified in putting aside, for the purposes of argument, their change of opinion. This question, after all, was a question between Home Rule and the maintenance of the Union. The Party headed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian desired to prove that the government of Ireland by the Imperial Parliament was impossible, and their main object was to attempt by all means in their power to frustrate the legislation which the Government were proposing for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman and hon. Members opposite who followed him had had the opportunity of endeavouring to persuade the English people that Home Rule, as proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, was the true remedy for the grievances of Ireland; and, notwithstanding the commanding eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman, they had ignominiously failed to persuade the country of any such thing. As they had failed with the country, so they would fail with Parliament. The Government believed that the legislation which they had proposed would be approved of by Parliament, and that by this measure, coupled with the remedial legislation which would enable the tenants to accept the boon which was offered them, they were, if they had fair play, far more likely to restore peace and prosperity to Ireland than by the scheme which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian proposed. That was the firm and deliberate opinion of the Government. The opinion of the constituencies at the last Election was the same. The Government, therefore, determined at all costs and at all hazards to persevere with their proposal, and to carry out the mandate which the constituencies gave them. For the first time in the history of England the Government of the day were opposed by the Opposition in their endeavours to restore law and order. If they were not supported by hon. Members opposite in their endeavours to restore law and order they were glad to think that they were supported by some of the most honoured names amongst the former Colleagues of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian—men who once owed allegiance to the Liberal Party. With their help, and with public approval, the Government were determined to press forward their legislation, firmly believing as they did that in the path which they had made for themselves lay the surest hope of restoring to Ireland once more the blessings of peace, happiness, and prosperity.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) said, that the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Ritchie) charged the Irish Members with having declared themselves in favour of separation. The Irish Members had, again and again in that House, declared the opposite. They had done the same in Ireland; and when the right hon. Gentleman brought forward charges like that he should have some proof. The right hon. Gentleman also charged the Irish Members with not desiring remedial legislation for Ireland. That charge came very badly from the right hon. Gentleman. He (Mr. Clancy) would point out that within the last 10 years about 100 Bills had been introduced of a remedial character for Ireland, and every one had been kicked out, largely by the help of the right hon. Gentleman and Gentlemen who sat behind him. The right hon. Gentleman had further stated that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was in the hands of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). He (Mr Clancy) did not think that that was the case. He believed that in the action which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian had taken there was something more than a desire to conciliate the Irish Party, and Irish Members were inclined to credit the right hon. Gentleman with the higher aim of endeavouring at last to do real justice to Ireland. It seemed to be the idea of hon. Members on the Ministerial Benches that it was a disgraceful thing to consult the views of the Constitutional Representatives of Ireland. They seemed to think that it was wrong for a Government to take into consideration the views of five-sixths of the Representatives of Ireland. Such a view of the matter might be a good Tory view, but it was not a view that ought to be countenanced by a Constitutional House of Commons. He was sorry the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) had thought fit to refer to the speech of the hon. Member for East Galway (Mr. Harris), which had been quoted so often in that House. The expression about partridges used by the hon. Member was withdrawn by him the very day he made it; and, in consequence of that withdrawal not having been reported in the papers, he deliberately went on the following Sunday to another Land League meeting for the purpose of repeating that withdrawal. The right hon. Gentleman had access to the official reports of all these speeches, and he must have known of this withdrawal, and should, therefore, have quoted it when he quoted the hon. Member's speech. The Government had been very unfortunate in their selection of defenders of their measure. Those defenders of the Bill were, for the most part, convicted rack-renters, like the newly-appointed Under Secretary (Colonel King-Harman), or the sons of absentee landlords, like the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Brodrick). Another defender of the Bill was an hon. Member for some part of Scotland who had been kicked out of Ireland. Then they had the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson), who would be known to posterity as the author of the "no name series of letters." Then they had the noble Lord the Member for the Ealing Division of Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton), whose speech was chiefly a family history, and a defence of the relations between his brother the Duke of Abercorn and his tenants. Next they had the hon. Member for North Derry (Mr. Mulholland), whose father was an Irish landlord who had been in the Land Court with his tenants, and the latter, having got large reductions, were compelled, before getting the benefit of the Land Act, to pay up the hanging gale, which had never been demanded for 100 years. The right hon. and learned

Gentleman the Home Secretary also spoke in defence of the Bill, the right hon. and learned Gentleman being an ardent Home Ruler and a contributor to the Home Rule funds until he failed to get an Irish seat. The hon. Member for Mid Leicestershire (Mr. De Lisle) also supported the Bill and attacked the Irish priests, and he (Mr. Clancy) was glad to find that this attack had not been made by a Protestant, but by a so-called Catholic. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Home Secretary told them that crime in Ireland had increased. According to the statistics, it had increased by a small proportion over that committed the year before; but he (Mr. Clancy) would call attention to the fact that they had now no means of testing whether the crimes included in the statistics were real or bogus crimes. For his own part, he firmly believed that a great many of the crimes reported by the Constabulary had never taken place at all; and in this connection he would point to the fact that only a few weeks ago a series of incendiary fires which took place in the county of Limerick, and which, no doubt, figured in the Returns of the past quarter, were afterwards proved to have been the act of a lunatic. He had no confidence in an Administration which denounced crime in the South of Ireland and winked at it in the North. Under the provisions of the Coercion Act of 1883 they had hanged at one Assizes at Maryborough 40 people. At the General Election of 1885 the Nationalist vote in the Queen's County amounted to 7,699, and the anti-Nationalist vote to 800. That was the way they had burned into the hearts of the Irish people a hatred of their rule, and he trusted that that hatred would never die out until the curse of Castle rule was driven from Ireland. For the quarter ending in September, 1885, when coercion was pronounced to be unnecessary, the crimes in Ireland amounted to 269; and in the quarter ending in September, 1886, they were only about 49, threatening letters included. During the whole time that the Plan of Campaign was in operation crime had decreased from 306 down to 165. Then they were told that a Coercion Bill was only directed against criminals; but if they looked at the history of coercion in Ireland, he thought that they would see that it had been used for the purpose of putting honest men who were political opponents of the Government into prison. So much was this the case that if one had not been imprisoned in Ireland, it was difficult to persuade the people there that one was an honest man, and he had himself apologized to his constituents by assuring them that it was not his own fault. They had put these Coercion Acts into force, and they had, in doing so, perpetrated thousands of crimes against human liberty. The statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Secretary for Ireland on the statistics of crime in Ireland were as dark and mysterious as those issued by the Cork Defence Union. Such of them as Irish Nationalist Members had been able to investigate had been proved to be utterly baseless. These inventions were numerous; but they were the only things the Government could rely upon in the debate, and he would ask, was it on inventions of that kind the Government were to take away every vestige of liberty from the Irish people? The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for England, the Solicitor General for England, and the Solicitor General for Scotland all rested their case mainly on the declarations of the majority of the Cowper Commission upon the subjects of Boycotting, intimidation, and crime; but he would like to know whether it was fair or just to take the recommendations of that body as evidence against the Irish Nationalist Party? Who were the Members of that Commission? Why, Lord Cowper, the head of the Commission, was himself a shameless partizan. He was the author of the idiotic phrase about "driving discontent under the surface in Ireland," and he gloried in his connection with the landlord rack-rent Party in Ireland. In his examination of the witnesses, he had put leading questions to them inviting the answers which he received; and on one occasion he suggested to Mr. M'Murrough Kavanagh, the head of the I.L.P.U., that certain statements should be circulated in leaflets throughout the land. Lord Cowper was not impartial; on the contrary, he was a gross partizan, and was no more to be trusted than the Irish landlords were. Then there was Lord Milltown. No one pretended that he was an impartial man. He was an avowed partizan of the landlords, and yet his statements were quoted as conclusive evidence against the people of Ireland on questions which affected his own class and even himself. Then there was Sir James Caird, who wrote a famous letter to *The Times.* In that letter he made a remarkable statement; and when it had served the purpose of defeating the Government of the day on the question of Home Rule, he immediately wrote another letter withdrawing the statement. He (Mr. Clancy) and his hon. Friends did not regard Sir James Caird as an impartial witness. As for Mr. Neligan, he was what was known in Ireland as a "shoneen," and belonged to the most worthless and most vicious class with which any country was ever cursed. They denied that this packed Commission should be quoted as evidence against them. The only man who could be said to have in any degree represented the Nationalist Party was Mr. Knipe, and he had disagreed with the recommendations of the Commission. With reference to the power contained in the Bill as to the change of venue for the trial of Irish prisoners in England, he would point out that the memory of Archbishop Plunket, of Armagh, who was tried in England on a charge which was now universally admitted to be false and absurd, and hanged and disembowelled at Tyburn, still lived in Ireland, and was one of those things which always made Irishmen hostile to British rule. At whose bidding were they going to pass this Bill, and who were calling out for measures of coercion in the sacred name of law and order? No other than the landlord Party in Ireland—a faction that was responsible for the extermination of 2,000,000 of the Irish people during the last 40 years—a faction that had filled the streets of America and other cities with thousands of the once virtuous daughters of Irish peasants, and a faction that had, by its inhuman cruelty, in the past, led thousands of men to the gallows. There was, however, one gleam of encouragement and consolation connected with the Bill, and it was in the fact that it was proposed by the Tories and renegade Liberals. They saw in that fact a fresh proof that the aristocratic classes, whatever side in politics they belonged to, were united now, as they had ever been, in obstructing the path of reform and in denying the people's rights. There was also another element of consolation. If the Bill were passed, the Irish National cause would survive it; and long after that hoarse reviler of Ireland, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his Colleagues had ceased to pour forth their invectives against the Irish nation, the Irish people, by the aid, he believed, of the great majority of the British people, would be in the firm and quiet enjoyment of those rights and liberties which they would now fain deny them.

MR. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow) said, the hon. Member who had last spoken (Mr. Clancy) told them the Irish people hated their laws; but he had not made clear the grounds on which he opposed this Bill. It was an abuse of language for hon. Members opposite to describe this Bill as "cruel" and "infamous." It was a measure, not to suppress the Irish people, but to suppress crime; in fact, it was a Bill for the protection of the liberties of the Irish people. It was of the very essence of government that the people should agree to submit to the laws. He admitted there had always been a great jealousy as to the Government which might be established; but a Government which could not put down crime would deservedly sink under the ridicule it would certainly evoke. He had been interested in listening to the valuable criticism on the details of the Bill with which the hon. and learned Member for Carlisle (Mr. Gully) favoured the House yesterday; but they had now to deal, not with details, but with principles. He thought it necessary to increase the powers of the Government, which were found to be insufficient; and though he intended to support the Government in voting for the second reading of the Bill, he yielded to no hon. Member in his earnest desire to see that the powers granted to the Government were properly guarded, so that they should not be misused; and when in Committee this point would deserve and receive due attention. A great deal had been said against the investigation clauses, which provided that an investigation might be held to inquire into the circumstances of any offence, though no one was charged with the offence. Well, Ireland was one of those rare countries in which preliminary investigations did not exist.

That method of procedure did however exist, and had long done so, in Scotland; but it was said that there the officer who had to carry out the investigation was a skilled law officer. It was so; and might not that become the case in Ireland? It was to be found in every country on the Continent. Even in England such a thing was known, for in every case where a murder had taken place such an investigation at present took place whenever a Coroner's inquest was held. Then, as to the provisions of the Bill dealing by summary jurisdiction with certain minor offences, these, he thought, formed its great merit, as it would have the effect, in most cases, of preventing the commission of larger offences. It was far better that persons charged with riotous proceedings at evictions and other minor offences should be dealt with summarily, instead of being sent for trial after a long interval to the Assizes, and before juries. The objection was raised that the Resident Magistrates invested with these summary powers were not lawyers. That was a point which could be settled in Committee, and any hon. Member could bring forward an Amendment providing that those powers should only be conferred on magistrates who were lawyers. The Resident Magistrates were the proper persons, in his opinion, to exercise this power, especially as it must always be borne in mind that Irish criminals had an advantage even in this, for there was a right of appeal in the case of these summary convictions to the Quarter Sessions, presided over by a trained lawyer. Objection was taken to the changes which were made in the system of trial by jury. He had the highest reverence for trial by jury, and was desirous that the system should not be abolished as had been said; but in a district where crimes were committed, where persons would not give evidence to assist in the vindication of the law, where the law was hated and regarded as an enemy, it would be absurd to empanel a jury consisting of men who were in some cases privy to the very crimes they had to investigate. At any rate, it was absolutely necessary, if trial by jury was to be maintained in Ireland, that there should be power of removing a trial from a disturbed to an undisturbed district, where a jury would be free to conscientiously discharge their duty. With regard to the change of venue, it was not to be applied all over Ireland. That fact, however, seemed to have been lost sight of. A change of venue in Ireland only was not sufficient; that was why the venue was to be changed to England. And that change of venue was only to be effected with the permission of such responsible persons as the Attorney General for England and the Attorney General for Ireland. Would hon. Members deny that that safeguard was not an efficient one? He understood, however, that the clause giving power to remove a trial from Ireland to England was intended merely as a power in reserve, to be used if necessary, and that, if the object in view could be secured by simply changing the venue in Ireland, it would not be resorted to. He believed, for his own part, that the clause would prove to be unnecessary, and would become a dead letter; and without in any degree affecting the sufficiency of the Bill for the purpose of re-establishing law and order in Ireland, he should not object to its being struck out of the Bill, because he believed the investigation clauses, the summary jurisdiction clauses, and the clauses for the change of venue in Ireland would be amply sufficient for the purposes of the Bill. As to the clauses dealing with dangerous associations, he would suggest to the Government — and the suggestion could be dealt with in Committee—that the clause should be either dropped altogether, or should be put in force simply where the Lord Lieutenant, on his own authority, issued a Proclamation to that effect, so as to avoid the necessity for coming to Parliament for approval of the proceeding. He would direct the attention of the Government to the danger that every Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant might be made the subject of a Motion for Urgency in Parliament, and might thus lead to a renewed waste of public time. It had been said that no case had been made out for this Bill, but he held a contrary opinion. In 1882 the Irish Members said that no case was made out for the Coercion Bill then introduced. But that did not apply to hon. Members above the Gangway opposite. They were bound to admit, as the Conservative Party admitted, that there was a case. That case lasted down to 1885, when a

General Election was pending, and it was not convenient for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) to introduce a renewal of the Crimes Act of 1882, for the "old Parliamentary hand" desired to keep well in with the Irish vote. Notwithstanding, what did his Cabinet resolve? In a correspondence which the right hon. Gentleman had with the right hon. Gentleman the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), he stated that his Government had resolved to abandon all the clauses of the previous Coercion Act except those which related to change of venue, special juries, and Boycotting, and those very provisions formed the substance of the Bill now before the House. The Government had honestly attempted to govern Ireland by means of the ordinary law. They had done their best; but they had found themselves utterly incapable to so govern or cope with a power and organization that existed to counteract them, and they now claimed the special powers that had been granted to their Predecessors in government. It was for Gentlemen opposite to show that such special powers were not necessary. The *onus probandi* lay upon them, and that made an important difference in considering the case. Yet, he would ask, why was this Bill called extraordinary law, if, as was said by hon. Members opposite, Coercion Bills for Ireland had been passed, on an average, once a-year since the Union? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian objected to the statements of the Judges which had been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), on the ground that they were extra-judicial; but if a Judge had dealt with the general state of the country, on any particular case which came before him, the right hon. Gentleman would have said that it was most unfair to prejudice the case of the prisoner in that way, and the Judge would have been open to the severest reprobation. Another right hon. Gentleman said that it was not usual for a Judge to go outside the calendar. But anyone who had to do with Assizes must know that Judges were accustomed, and that it was their duty, to refer to the state of the country, and make observations on the subject. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) had said that the charges of Judges in certain districts were given, while the charges of Judges in other districts were not. But the object of the Chief Secretary for Ireland was to prove that certain districts were disturbed, and to have gone out of his way to quote charges which had no bearing on the subject would have been illogical. It had been urged by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and his right hon. Friend had produced evidence of the most convincing character, based upon official statistics, which proved that nine-tenths of the agrarian crimes committed in 1885 remained undetected, and were not even brought under investigation; but those figures were either disregarded or treated with contempt by hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House. Irish Members had affirmed that the ordinary crime of Ireland was less than that of England; but a comparison of the judicial statistics of the two countries, which he (Mr. Ambrose) had made, showed that the aggregates of the indictable offences and of offences that could be summarily dealt with amounted to 469·7 per 10,000 of the population of Ireland and only 268·79 per 10,000 of the population of England, so that the ordinary crime of Ireland was much greater than that of England, although England was under the disadvantage that its large towns afforded a protection for criminals which was not to be found in the agricultural districts of Ireland. That, he contended, proved the necessity for the measure the Government sought to introduce. He further said that whatever number of cases of crime were cited on behalf of the Government, whether 10 or 10,000 hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite should have put into their hands evidence, from some source or another, to show that they were exploded cases, the statistics of crime which had been put forward were, he held, of an important character, and fully justified the Bill. It seemed to be generally admitted that juries in Ireland would not convict; and, surely, it could not be denied, after the acquittal of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) by a Dublin jury, in spite of his avowed adhesion to the Plan of Campaign and the declaration by the highest authority that it was an illegal conspiracy. The explanation was that the Government of the Queen had been deposed by the *de facto* Government of the League, and it was claimed that the *de facto* Government should be converted into the Government *de jure*. It was a miserable subterfuge to compare the National League with the Primrose League; for the Primrose League did not back up its decrees by murder, and nobody ever said that crime dogged its footsteps, or that it aimed at illegal objects, or at lawful objects by illegal means. [*Laughter.*] He challenged anyone to produce a single piece of evidence in support of the charges made against the Primrose League. If coercion had sometimes been a failure, it was because, according to the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, it had been inadequate, and because, according to the right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), it had been fitful and not continuous. The hon. and learned Gentleman the late Attorney General (Sir Charles Russell) was surprised that anyone should reproduce what he called the exploded libel about the Kilmainham Treaty. They were told that they had no mandate to support coercion; but hon. Members opposite would admit that the mandate was to maintain the Union and the authority of Parliament, and that necessarily implied that no rival should be allowed to set itself up in opposition to the Imperial Parliament. It was said again that they ought not to pass this measure against the will of 86 Representatives of the Irish people; but, while the just claims of landlords could not be carried out, if tradesmen could not employ whom they liked, if there was a system of terrorism going on, and the National League was the *de facto* Government of Ireland, he refused to accept the 86 Nationalist Members as representing the voice of Ireland. The proposition that the majority of a district forming part of the United Kingdom was to govern against the majority of the whole of the Empire was untenable and unsound. They heard a great deal said about impossible rents; but, for his part, he had never seen or heard any evidence that any rents in Ireland were impossible. The Cowper Commission, certainly, had not proved that such was the case. On the contrary, the fact was that rents appeared to be impossible as regarded payment, merely because the National League had made them so. The Cowper Commission had nowhere reported that rents were excessive or exorbitant; it was true that they had said that there had been a fall in the price of agricultural produce, and recommended an earlier revision of rents; but, in so doing, they were dealing rather with the inability of the tenant to pay. The tenant right of holdings in Ireland was selling at 20 and 22 years' purchase, and he thought that no tenant farmer in England would be said to be rack-rented if such were the state of things in his case. After all, they came back to the principal question in this matter before the House, which was whether the mandate which they had received from the constituencies last year should be carried out? Hon. Members opposite contended that that was merely the issue of whether there should be coercion or not; but the real question was the same, whether or not the Union of Great Britain and Ireland was to be maintained?—and as to that there could be no doubt as to what the answer of Parliament would be.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) said, that, not being a trained lawyer, and not possessing the inestimable advantage of a legal mind, he would not venture to follow the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Harrow (Mr. Ambrose), who had just sat down, throughout his discursive and somewhat lengthy speech. He would just remark that the hon. and learned Gentleman had pronounced the most emphatic condemnation of the Bill he had yet heard, because he deliberately proposed to cut out two, if not three, of the clauses of the Bill. In fact, after the vigorous operation of the pruning knife by the hon. and learned Gentleman, little of the Bill would be left. In making a few remarks on the question before the House, he (Dr. Farquharson) did not pretend to any consistency. It was years ago since he had his attack of coercion. He had it when his political constitution was in a young and tender state. He was exposed to strong infection, and he caught the attack; but the attack of coercion on him was like the attack of small-pox or scarlet fever on other people—he was not likely to have a second attack. He had since come under infection of another kind. He did not, as he said, pretend to consistency. Consistency was sometimes mischievous. The conditions of the human mind changed and circumstances changed. They had to consider the teachings of history and experience, and go with the times. He did not think that those who were now eating cheap bread would find much fault with the inconsistency of Sir Robert Peel, or that many hon. Gentlemen opposite would find fault with Lord Beaconsfield's famous "leap in the dark," which had led to Tory democracy. He (Dr. Farquharson) supported coercion in 1881 and 1882 for reasons which he thought good at the time. There was an elaborate Blue Book of statistical evidence, and they had a powerful speech introducing the measures, and at the time he considered that a good case was made out. He was bound to confess now, with a certain amount of shame, that he often voted blindly on account of what he considered to be the irritating conduct of the Irish Members. But nations struggling against oppression were apt to be irritated. Champions of human progress were often provoked into personalities. He had no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) and Mr. Cobden, when they were advocating the repeal of the Corn Laws, were sometimes provoked to personalities, and that in the great discussions on the Reform Bills there were irritating speeches. Looking back upon the old debates, he was now convinced that the Irish were perfectly right in their obstruction, and that he was frequently wrong. Besides, they were told in 1881 that they were to have a Land Act passed shortly afterwards which was to settle the Irish difficulty, and bring back peace and prosperity to the country; and therefore he was the more induced then to vote for coercion. But what had been the result of all the Coercion Acts? There had, no doubt, been a certain temporary advantage. There was an outward show of restored law and order, and no doubt the Land Act had been of great value to the Irish farmers; but there was nothing solid or permanent. Were we any nearer the solution of this great question? Did the Irish love us or respect our rule more than they did before? Was it not a sad, a mournful, and a humiliating position for the Government to come again, and, amid the protests of the Irish Members and the jeers of foreign nations, invite the House to pass an 87th Coercion Act for a nation which had enjoyed the benefits of our rule for the same number of years? A great many things had happened since the first coercive measure. The irritation of the Irish against coercion was now expressed by the vast majority of the Constitutionally-elected Representatives of the country. The Land Question had become acute. The moderate Amendment of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) had been rejected, and, most important of all, the question of Home Rule had now entered the domain of practical politics. A definite scheme had been offered to and accepted by the Irish people, so that they were now able to study this question in a business-like and practical form. He remembered in 1880, when he first stood for Parliament, a "heckler" asked him—"Are you in favour of Home Rule?" His reply was that he should be very happy to answer the question if his friend would tell him what he meant by Home Rule. That was his position in 1880. There was then no practical proposal before the country. He did not know then what Home Rule meant, and was not able to study the Irish Question in the practical way he could now study it. He objected to the present coercive measure on account of the failure of the old plan, and on account of the opportunity which had been given him to study the Irish Question through the medium of Home Rule. An education had been given him— largely by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. Coming to the Bill itself, he said that the original case was admittedly weak, because everyone who had followed the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), and especially the lawyers, had dwelt with an iteration which was sometimes wearisome upon the points on which the right hon. Gentleman himself laid little stress—namely, upon the statistics of crime. A good many of those who might have been expected to support the Bill had been horrified by its look. Those who were to be its godfathers started away in horror; and he was glad to see that the most eminent of its intended godfathers, Sir George Trevelyan, had thrown a bombshell into the Conservative and Unionist camp in Aberdeen, and had declined to have anything whatever to do with the Bill. In fact, the disaffection had become so acute and alarming that the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Colonies

(Sir Henry Holland) was put up yesterday to rally the forces by the announcement that by this Bill the Government meant to stand or fall. They had heard a good many excuses for the Bill. They were told that it was only a little one. That was an excuse which had been made before; but it was not the opinion of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). Then they were told that it was to restore law and order. Really, they were hearing so much about law and order that one almost hated the term. It was the parrot cry of every dinner table and club smoking-room. Plans of varying ferocity and ingenuity were propounded to restore law and order. But what had they been doing during the last 86 years? What were those 86 Acts but attempts—which had absolutely failed—to restore law and order? No doubt they had managed to spread over the surface of things a thin veneer of law made by force, and of order made to order; but no real hold had been taken on the affections and hearts of the people. The present Bill was the 87th advertisement of our proved incapacity to rule Ireland by anything but an iron hand. They might have right law administered by the wrong people. They might have bad law mixed up with good law. We had been administering the affairs of Ireland for many years with little knowledge of their wants or sympathy with their patriotic aspirations. They had heard a good deal about the necessity of this Coercion Bill as a preliminary to the bringing in a remedial measure. Why should the way for our remedial measures for Ireland be paved with the shattered liberties of the Irish people? If these remedial measures were good he supposed that they would be accepted without compulsion. If they were bad, they could not compel the Irish people to accept what they did not want to have. They had heard one very remarkable reason given for the acceptance of this Bill—namely, that it was not coercion at all, but a remedial measure. That was a sweet balm to the conscience of those who had got to swallow what they did not like. Yet hon. Gentlemen seemed to think that the Irish people should be rather grateful for the favour that was offered them. If he might repeat the Shakespearian quotation of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie), he would say, "Very like a whale." He had heard some remarks from the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson), whose abilities he admired—he was only sorry they were not employed in a better cause—that the liberty of being at large would not be infringed by this Bill, and asked them what liberty was taken away under this Bill. He (Dr. Farquharson) should have thought it was the liberty to do almost anything in a proclaimed district. He had no doubt that when the Bill came into operation the prisons would be crowded and the Courts would be blocked. Many of the unfortunate people who would come under the operation of the Act would be compelled to wait a considerable period before their cases would be tried. He should like to know whether, in those circumstances, bail was to be allowed or not? He had no doubt that if this Bill was to be worked by lawyers it would be properly administered according to law. But the Bill was not to be worked by lawyers. They would have informers dogging the footsteps of suspected persons, who were obnoxious to the authorities of the Castle. Spies would be working in every direction, and they would have garbled extracts from speeches, by which it was possible almost to prove anything; and under Sections 4 and 5 they would be able to include almost anything peaceful, law-abiding people might do. What was the tribunal under which these offences were to be tried? In the first place, the cases thus got up were to be brought before Resident Magistrates, who had little or no knowledge of law—half-pay captains with small means, large families, and no law. These men were to be intrusted with the most difficult and delicate duties—namely, that of deciding what was evidence and what was not. Then they came to summary jurisdiction. They were to have two magistrates, one of whom was to have as much knowledge of law as would be satisfactory to the Lord Lieutenant. He should like to know what was to be the Lord Lieutenant's standard? Was he to give a Degree in Law, as the Archbishop of Canterbury was empowered to give a Degree of Music? He would like to make it clear that the analogy of Scottish criminal procedure would not hold as a defence of this Bill. In the first place, in Scotland there was an inquiry on the spot by the Procurator Fiscal; and although, as the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland had told them, the Procurator Fiscal was not a Judge, he was a trained lawyer, and a man of experience and standing. The summary jurisdiction in Scotland was carried on by the Sheriff, who was also a trained lawyer. In Ireland it was to be granted to amateur lawyers; and, as a professional man himself, he had a great distrust of amateurs, whether lawyers, doctors, or even clergymen. They knew that if the Crimes Act had been renewed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, the summary jurisdiction would have been taken before two stipendiary magistrates. Under this Bill, the most difficult, delicate, and intricate questions of law were to be decided by gentlemen who had no proper or systematic training whatever. They were told that under this Bill the National League might be proclaimed. He did not think that a similar policy had been very successful on a former occasion, when the Land League was proclaimed. He thought nothing could be more dangerous than to drive in the superficial appearance of disturbance, where disturbance depended upon some internal or Constitutional ailment. Medical metaphors had become popular in the House. They were generally wrong. But he would venture upon using a medical metaphor which he believed was perfectly sound. When they found on the surface of the body an eruption which depended upon internal or constitutional disease, if they applied local remedies to allay the eruption and get rid of it by driving it in, they would probably not infrequently kill the patient or ruin his constitution. That was in perfect analogy to the present condition of things in Ireland. We were treating and tinkering at the external manifestations of an internal and Constitutional malady. If we drove it in below the surface, secret societies of various classes would spring up, and we should eventually damage the Constitution of Ireland, and, perhaps, ruin it altogether. In conclusion, he wished to ask when was this work—this policy of despair—coming to an end? It was time to stop tinkering and do something definite. Of course, this Bill would pass. As they knew, the Tories opposite followed their Leaders in the most docile manner, and they would go into the Lobby in favour of the measure. The Liberal Unionists would vote with them, because, though they hated coercion, they hated the late Prime Minister even more. They would swallow coercion or anything else to keep the present Government in power and keep the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian out. But they must go further. They must go on to disfranchise Ireland and govern it as a Crown Colony, and crush her for ever under the iron heel of despotism, or else give her Home Rule and the right to govern her own affairs in her own way. They had chosen their policy. But the tide was turning in favour of Irish aspirations. The Government had found it necessary to send Sir Robert Hamilton to the Antipodes in order to prevent the conversion of successive Lords Lieutenant to Home Rule. Meetings were going on all over the country. The magnificent meeting in Hyde Park, which was a great and brilliant success, was being followed up by similarly successful meetings in every part of the country. But, best of all, this Bill was working for the Irish cause. It was providing for those who advocated Home Rule the best platform from which to expound their views, because it was demonstrating the necessity of Home Rule as the only alternative. A little more education of the people of this country—a little more time—and he had not the least doubt that the result would be that the Irish cause would be won.

Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): The hon. Member who has just sat down (Dr. Farquharson) has spoken with the zeal of a convert, and in doing so he has followed the example of many right hon. and hon. Gentlemen who sit on the Front Opposition Bench. I, as a Radical Unionist, am not ashamed of my opinions or of my Leaders. On the contrary, I am proud of them. There has never been a time when two men have come forward in a great cause and showed such great self-sacrifice as the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain.) [*Ironical cheers.*] Hon. Members below the Gangway laugh at them, and sneer at them, but they know that they are a power in the country. What other means could they have adopted in order to endeavour to carry out their views? They fought the battles of the Liberal Party long before many hon. Members below the Gangway entered upon political life. For my own part, I have fought 10 fights in the Liberal cause, and yet I am told by some new Members that I am not a Liberal. I do not accept such a reproach, but I put upon them this reproach—that they have accepted allies and adopted a policy of which many Liberals are ashamed. A short extract will show what is done and said at some of the meetings in opposition to the Government proposition. On Saturday last, at a meeting in Battersea Park, at which an hon. Member of this House was present, a Mr. Burns said that—

> "Mr. Chamberlain would not get the cow, but the ball; and the amount of ground necessary for him would be 6 feet by 2 feet."

Mr. Burns then proceeded to vindicate the attempted assassination of the Emperor of Russia, and expressed a hope that Lord Salisbury, the Czar, and Mr. Chamberlain would all get their quietus by means of the parcel post and a certain chemical combination which he named. When such statements are made and accepted with pleasure at public meetings, they show to a considerable extent what the object really is. The chairman who presided at the meeting protested against the observations of this gentleman, but his protest was received with marked disfavour by the whole of the meeting. My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. O. V. Morgan), who was not present at that particular platform, found it incumbent upon him to write to *The Times* to say that he also would have protested if he had heard those words spoken. I maintain that this is an attempt to coerce the Liberal Unionists, and to coerce them by threats; but if it has any effect at all, it rather tends to confirm them in the views they entertain. What are the measures which are being adopted by those who object to the present Bill? I have in my hand a small paper which was used widely throughout London, and which reached me in the ordinary way, for the purpose of collecting the meeting in Hyde Park, to which the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) has just referred with such satisfaction. It is headed, "What the Coercion Bill is," and then follows three notes of exclamation. It states that under the Bill of the Government trial by jury is to be abolished for almost all offences, and in its place is to be substituted trial by Resident Magistrates, generally half-pay officers appointed by the Executive Government, whose servants they are, and who will have power to inflict a sentence of six months' imprisonment with hard labour for offences many of which are of an undefined character, the probable effect of which is stated to be that the tenant will be placed at the mercy of the landlord. It is said that persons may be examined on oath, although no trial is taking place, and that they may be compelled to give evidence, even if the evidence they give may tend to criminate themselves. That is what is stated in this paper, in order to induce the country to believe that these are the objects of the Bill, though, of course, the writers of the Bill know well how untrue many of the statements are. Now, I should like to know what coercion really is? The question has been asked again and again in the course of this debate, but no answer has been given. One hon. Member of this House declared, in glowing terms upon a public platform, that the Bill will coerce 5,000,000 of his fellow-countrymen; but, for my own part, I am convinced that it will coerce nobody who abides by the ordinary law. The fact is, endeavour to blink it as you like, that coercion in this case simply means the coercion of the criminal population. It does not mean coercion of either you or me. We are endeavouring to coerce the law-breakers in order to maintain the ordinary rights of society; and if the present law is not sufficient, then it is the duty of any Government to endeavour to increase the powers they possess. Governments have duties to perform to those who abide by the law, just as much as they have duties to perform in regard to those who break the law; and if it is, as it must be, considered necessary to repress crime and outrage either in England or Ireland, it is not only the right, but the duty, of the Government to ask for all necessary powers. What has been said on previous occasions? It has been stated, over and over again, that this is the strongest Coercion Bill that has ever been brought forward in the House of Commons. I deny it altogether. Let me ask whether it contains any such power as that which enabled the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian to confine in prison in 12 months 1,200 men, as he did in the year 1881? Among those men there were several Members of Parliament, some of them much respected in this House — and they were all imprisoned without trial, on reasonable suspicion only. If such a power had been asked for by the present Government I should have done all in my power to oppose it. They have gone in a different direction—a direction which was indicated in the speeches they delivered in 1882. I should like the House to consider what that direction is. The direction in which the Government desire to go is very simple. It is found, and is nowhere denied, that of the offences which are committed in Ireland 80 per cent are committed with entire impunity, and without anybody knowing who the offenders are, or who they are suspected to be. I say that a condition of law under which such an occurrence is possible is not a right state of things. The Government, therefore, have looked into the state of the law and they perceive that the fault lies in the fact that before they can make any proper inquiry with regard to an offence they have to charge somebody with having committed it. Surely that is an absurdity, and, therefore, I think that the 1st clause of the Bill is eminently reasonable and desirable. Now, to come to the next point, I find that in the year 1882 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) used these words in regard to his own Bill—

> "There will be power given to Justices to inquire into crime, even where the criminal has escaped; there will be power to Justices to compel the attendance of witnesses who are about to abscond; there will be power to the Lord Lieutenant to appoint such additional police as he may think necessary in any particular district at the charge of the locality. There will also be compensation for murder and maiming of cattle, which will be levied on the district in which the offence was committed. Then, what is to give vitality to these provisions is the summary jurisdiction. I have pointed out that, owing to the terrorism which has been made to operate on the minds of juries, it has been necessary to have a special tribunal for the greater classes of crime; but, with respect to those offences which may be regarded as in the second category, it is equally necessary to have a speedy and certain punishment; and, therefore, we propose to make the offences in this Act, to which I have referred, punishable summarily, and the Court of Summary Jurisdiction will consist of two Stipendiary Magistrates."—(3 *Hansard*, [269] 470.)

I have read that passage because I wish to point out to hon. Members below the Gangway the difference between this Bill and the Bill of 1882. In the year 1882 the right hon. Member for Derby proposed to give this summary power with regard to a certain class of offences to the Stipendiary Magistrates. We have heard much about the Stipendiary Magistrates of Ireland, but there is this to be said—that when an offence, even if small in itself, is tried summarily and the offender punished, the lesson is not soon forgotten; whereas the importance which attends a great State trial has a tendency, with the delay involved, to inflame the passions of the whole population and thus do great harm. We must also remember that very important matters are now settled by the ordinary magistrates under very little control. Therefore, I am inclined to think that the evil which has been anticipated from conferring this summary jurisdiction upon the Resident Magistrates—not the Stipendiary Magistrates, as in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby—has been greatly exaggerated. One great objection that has been raised is that Boycotting would come under the summary jurisdiction of the Resident Magistrates. I say that Boycotting ought to be put down; and I should like to ask the House to consider for a moment what has been said about Boycotting by two very high authorities on the matter. One of them says—

> "The process called Boycotting is, according to the hon. Member, a legitimate and proper process. What is meant by Boycotting? In the first place, it is combined intimidation. In the second place, it is combined intimidation made use of for the purpose of destroying the private liberty of choice by fear of ruin and starvation. In the third place, that being what Boycotting is in itself, we must look to this—that the creed of Boycotting, like every other creed, requires a sanction; and the sanction of Boycotting—that which stands in the rear of Boycotting, and by which alone Boycotting can, in the long run, be made thoroughly effective—is the murder which is not to be denounced."—(3 *Hansard*, [269] 1551.)

Whose words are those? They are not

my words; I should not venture to use such strong language, but they were used in the House of Commons on the 24th of May, 1882, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). They show what the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to Boycotting was at that time. Let me turn now to Lord Cowper's Commission. In their Report the Commissioners say—

> "We deem it right to call attention to the terrible ordeal that a Boycotted person has to undergo, which was by several witnesses graphically described during the progress of our inquiry. The existence of a Boycotted person becomes a burden to him, as none in town or village are allowed, under a similar penalty to themselves, to supply him or his family with the necessaries of life. He is not allowed to dispose of the produce of his farm. Instances have been brought before us in which his attendance at Divine Service was prohibited, in which his cattle have been, some killed, some barbarously mutilated; in which all his servants and labourers were ordered and obliged to leave him; in which the ordinary necessaries of life, and even medical comforts, had to be procured from long distances; in which no one would attend the funeral of, or dig a grave for, a member of a Boycotted person's family, and in which his children have been forced to discontinue attendance at the National School of the district"

I have quoted these two passages to show what the opinion of two such high authorities is on the subject of Boycotting, and I cannot believe that any hon. Member will deny that if the Government can put it down by any reasonable enactment it is their duty to do so. I do not say that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) will be successful, but I think he has a duty to perform, and I have no doubt that he is prepared to perform it. Upon this point I may say that there is one provision introduced into the Bill which has not been included in any previous Bill, and that is that in addition to the right of the magistrate to punish there is a right given to the accused of appeal from the decision of the magistrates to the Quarter Sessions. That provision shows that the Government are anxious to deal fairly with the person charged, and to give him every reasonable protection under the law. In addition to that there is another provision in the Bill which lays down that, notwithstanding anything contained in the Bill, the existing law shall still run. It will, therefore, be seen that a man can be tried under the existing law, but that if tried under the new law he can appeal to the Quarter Sessions. Under these circumstances, I cannot conceive that any injustice is done to anybody; but, on the contrary, it appears to me that the provisions of the Bill are such reasonable provisions as the House of Commons ought to support. I come now to a special clause of the Bill which has been strongly condemned. I think with regard to the question of trial by jury that it is an advantage to the prisoner that he should have the right to be tried by a special jury; and I know that in England some years ago, when I had the honour of having something to do with legal work, it was a not uncommon complaint in this country that while a man might have a special jury when only his property was at stake, he must be content with a common jury when his liberty or his life was in peril. The Government provide that under special circumstances a man shall be tried by a special jury, and this may be done not only at the instance of the Government, but at that of the man charged. Now I do not see why gentlemen of intelligence should not be selected to try serious offences as well as cases which merely affect property. We are told that the prisoner would by a change of venue be exposed to difficulties and dangers and to unfair treatment, and that, in particular, a change of venue to England would be grossly unjust. I have been endeavouring for some days to discover where the injustice would be of bringing over prisoners to England to be tried by an English jury, and I have failed. Hon. Members below the Gangway tell us they have no confidence in Irish Judges because they are political, and none in Irish juries because they are partizan; but no one accuses the English Judges of being political, or English juries of being partizan, and I cannot, therefore, see why hon. Members should object to the change. For my own part, I am satisfied that English juries would deal justly with all prisoners who might come before them, and in trying Irish prisoners I know that they would be inclined to lean rather to the side of the accused than to that of the Government. I am also satisfied that the Judges would take precisely the same course in criminal cases, and would endeavour to sum up fairly, and properly pointing out to the jury everything that would tell in favour of the prisoner. This being the position with regard to the Bill, I cannot help remarking that a great amount of undeserved odium has been thrown upon the Liberal Unionist Members who support the Government in the undertaking they have upon their hands. It has been said that although they love Liberal principles and dislike coercion, still they dislike the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian more, and for that reason they are endeavouring to keep him out of power. Hon. Members who say that can hardly be aware of the feelings of many hon. Gentlemen, who, like myself, have sat under the right hon. Gentleman for 20 years, and have had many opportunities of admiring his great eloquence, his splendid ability and knowledge, and his great generosity towards those with whom he has had to deal. But do they not think that two men can honestly differ in opinion? For my own part, I am of opinion that the proposal submitted to the House by the right hon. Gentleman last year was not conducive to the best interests of the country. For that reason I voted against it, as I should be prepared to vote again. But this is not from any disrespect or from any want of regard for the right hon. Gentleman, and I venture to appeal to hon. Members neither to think nor to say such things as have been said in regard to the action of the Liberal Unionists. Hon. Members who make such observations should remember that it is much more agreeable to be on what is called the popular side. If you go to any meeting it is always possible to get cheap applause from the rabble. It is different when you go to a meeting where the intelligence of the country is collected; but hon. Members know that the cry of "No Coercion" is always a cheap and by far a more agreeable cry to go to the country with than the advocacy of principles which we believe to be right, although they may happen to be distasteful. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I know it is disagreeable to hon. Members, and especially to hon. Members below the Gangway, to hear some of these observations; but I ask them to remember that I do not use them in order to spite them in any way. For many of them I have the highest regard, but, where a great cause is concerned, it is not right to allow personal considerations to intervene. Whether the vote which we Liberal Unionists give in this House will conduce to our success as Parliamentary candidates in the future signifies not at all. It is our bounden duty to give our votes according to our consciences for what is best in the interests of the two countries, regardless of the consequences. It is for that reason that I despise the threats which are constantly held out to Liberal Unionists, and I shall persevere in the course which I have marked out for myself, because I believe that by so doing I am supporting a policy by which every fair grievance can be redressed. I observe that the opposition to the Bill now before the House is maintained to a great extent in order to promote the cause of Home Rule. But I am convinced that it would be better if Irish Members would meet this Question with moderate language and endeavour to dissociate it from the cause in which they are particularly interested. It is a most remarkable thing that in the first Parliament under the extended franchise the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian did not give a chance to the House to redress Irish grievances, but immediately proposed a policy of separation. When I discuss this Question with my friends on the Continent great astonishment is shown by them, because they say that while every other country is endeavouring to promote its strength by union, the Liberal Party in this country are endeavouring to strengthen the country by cutting it into two halves. I think that this is a most unnatural process. As far as we are concerned, it is our duty as Liberal Unionists to maintain the cause of law and order, and as far as we can to strengthen the hands of the Government. We trust that they will do all in their power to meet the just demands of the Irish people. We do not believe that those just demands can be met by Home Rule, such as was proposed by the measure of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. I thank the House for having listened to these observations. I regret deeply to find myself divided from many hon. Gentlemen with whom I have worked cordially for many years in the promotion of many great public questions, but I consider that this question of the unity of the Empire is far greater than anything else, and the first necessity of the case is to secure the maintenance of law and order. I feel bound to vote for the second reading of the Bill. The Government say that they require the powers which they now ask, and I am, therefore, unwillingly obliged to vote for them. At the same time, I know that these powers will not be exercised and cannot be exercised in any unfair way, because they are hedged around by safeguards which never existed in Ireland in connection with any previous Coercion Act. I regret that there should be so much Party feeling in the matter, and that ungenerous reproaches should have been so freely bandied about. I trust that Irish Members will admit, whether they agree with us or not, that our motives are pure. We have no personal object to serve, because, as they tell us, we are to lose our seats at the next Election. We have been told that over and over again; and whether it is true or not the future will show. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has told us that the door of repentance is open to us, and that he is ready yet to take the whole of us to his arms. He also tells us that if we do not accept his offer we ought to know what our fate will be. Of course we are to be Boycotted in regard to our future Parliamentary life. At the same time, such threats will not deter us from doing our duty. I have only to thank the House for the indulgence it has shown in listening to me so attentively.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford): I rise for the purpose of offering a few observations to the House upon this Bill; and, in the first place, allow me to refer to some of the words which have fallen from my hon. Friend (Sir Julian Goldsmid) who has just spoken. I am aware that he gets on very swimmingly as a Liberal who has fought 10 fights at those meetings of what he is pleased to call "the rabble." I have no doubt that he is able to get on well with them if he begs the question by describing the Home Rule measure which was presented to the House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) as a measure of separation. I think my hon. Friend knows that we have always stoutly denied that, and firmly believe that the course taken by the hon. Baronet and his Friends is far more likely to lead to separation than the course pursued by my right hon. Friend. The hon. Baronet says that this is not a strong Bill; but I think that the strength of a Coercion Bill depends very much upon how you are going to look at it—whether you are going to apply it to somebody else, or to live under it yourselves. At all events, this Bill is strong in two points. In the first place, it is strong in this—that no other Ministry has ever ventured to bring in a Coercion Bill which is applied as part of the permanent law of the land to Ireland. That is what comes of my hon. Friend's doctrine of equal laws between the two countries. But, in the second place, the Bill is strong in another matter—that you will have to go back for more than 100 years before you will find a proposal to bring over prisoners from another country to be tried here, not necessarily in London, but in any county or place that the Government may select. I do not want to argue that question, or any of the details of the Bill upon this stage; because, for one good reason, we do not know how many will be thrown overboard; but this I will say—that if this proposal for bringing Irish prisoners to be tried in London is carried out, I believe that it will give a greater assistance to those who are organizing Liberal meetings throughout the country, and will have a greater effect than any other efforts that could be made to bring back the electorate of London to Liberal principles. Indeed, I believe that the Liberal Party themselves may rest upon their oars, for I am quite convinced that a few examples of Irish prisoners, with witnesses and counsel, brought over to be tried at the Old Bailey will do much to make the Liberal electors of London arrive at a right conclusion. I agree with my hon. Friend in deprecating the threats and the hateful language which have been used towards some of the Liberal Unionist Members. Such language is to be condemned only less than an outrage completely carried out. My hon. Friend says the only effect of such language is to pin the Liberal Unionists more firmly to the position they have taken up. Of course, that is the effect of it; but does he think that language of that kind, used by wild and intemperate men, is a reason why I and others should be driven from a cause which we think to be the cause of justice? My hon. Friend boasts that he has fought 10 battles in the Liberal cause. So have I; and in the course of them I have heard many wild things said and have seen many rough things done. Does my hon. Friend—or does any other good Liberal — think that because things have been said which we condemn that we are to be driven from the course of policy we had taken up, and which recommends itself to our good sense and judgment? There is no reason why we should be taunted with words for which we are not responsible, and which we condemn, and which we know instead of advancing the cause for which they are uttered, can do nothing but steadily retard it. I should not have troubled the House on this occasion but for some remarks which were made by my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie). I was sorry to hear some of the observations which fell from him. They did not seem to be in unison with the usual calm fair-mindedness of my right hon. Friend. I hardly understood his sneer at those who have followed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. He imputed that some of those who have followed the right hon. Gentleman have been actuated by unworthy motives. Does the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board mean to say that a great political Party is never obliged to come to a sudden and an important decision? Have rapid conversions been so altogether absent from the political history of the Party which the right hon. Gentleman himself represents? The right hon. Gentleman selected an instance and an example which shows the value of his criticism. He chose my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) as an instance of one who would be ready at any moment, on all occasions, and at any cost, to follow the late Prime Minister. Now, my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board has not been for very many years a Member of this House; but I think he has been long enough here to know that if there is one man living who has sacrificed position, prospects, power, and fame for the sake of independent action, it is my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax. The President of the Local Government Board was not content with that kind of sneer; but he went on to say that we on this side of the House did not want remedial legislation. What does the right hon. Gentleman mean by that? Does he mean to impute to us that we are desirous of keeping open this contest rather than pass remedial measures with which in our own hearts we agree? Does the right hon. Gentleman think that we are not aware of the gravity of the crisis which is impending? Is his hunger and thirst for reform so great that he imagines that we on this side of the House cannot equally feel how this question impedes all the other subjects which are ripe for settlement? What we say is this—bring in your remedial legislation, and do not poison it beforehand with coercion. Luckily, we are not without witnesses on this point. On more than one occasion the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has said—"If you will settle this question, I will help you." And we say that again now. If the Government have got remedial measures, so grave is the state of affairs that on this side of the House we are perfectly ready to help them to settle it; but your remedial legislation lags behind, and your coercion comes first. I am not going to follow my right hon. Friend into his prophecies as to what will be the result of the next Election. I have heard a good many of those prophecies on both sides of the House in my time. What we ought to turn to is history, and at the last General Election we know what lost most votes for our side. It was not the question of Home Rule; but it was the question which had been worked so skilfully and so well on the other side—namely, the question of the Land Purchase Bill. It was that which lost us so many votes, and which gained them for you. It was stated by our opponents on that occasion that there was some other course than Home Rule, and that it was not coercion. Well, now, where is the fulfilment? Your first measure is coercion, and your second or your third is to be land purchase. Now, I wonder whether my right hon. Friend would, on calm consideration, think that some of those 70,000 votes which turned the whole scale at the last Election might not have been given on the other side if the electors could have had a peep into the future, and had been able to see the April of 1887. We say that Her Majesty's Government have not learned much from the history of Ireland. We say that you are applying old methods to new and altered conditions. We say that you have not considered the great events that no longer make coercion an applicable remedy for the existing state of things. We say that you do not remember that when Parliament emancipated the Catholics, you could no longer disregard the Catholic vote. We say that you have not duly learned the lesson of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, and the blow which it gave to Protestant ascendancy. We say, further, that you have not considered the result of the extension of the suffrage to the people of Ireland upon equal terms with England; and, finally—the most potent factor of all—we say that within the last few years the conviction has been growing and deepening in the minds of the people of this country that the results of our system of rule in Ireland have been a long-standing and cruel injustice to the tenants of Ireland; and we think it is not improbable that as we have discovered through the Reports of numerous Commissions and Inquiries the real facts as to the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland, the complaints which are made with regard to the administration of justice in Ireland and other matters may not turn out to be equally well-founded. It seems to me that when you talk of surrender to those hon. Members who follow the lead of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) you are using a misnomer. Is it a surrender, a base and shameful surrender, having given the franchise to Ireland, to listen to the voice of the electorate? You say, why do you surrender now, when formerly you fought the hon. Member for Cork? We had not then learnt the wishes of five-sixths of the population of Ireland. We had not then learnt the truth, as we know it now, of the relations of the landlord and tenants of Ireland. Remember how that question has grown. Remember how, not 10 years ago, the Bill for the Compensation for Disturbance was thrown out in the House of Lords, and remember what grew from that. Since then we have had the Report of the Cowper Commission. Year after year we have had the truth coming out more clearly. We did not know in old days that rent was being paid in Ireland which never came from the produce of the soil.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Not at all.

MR. WHITBREAD: The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary disagrees with that. That was not always his opinion. As long as there was harvest work in England, and the unfortunate small Irish occupier could came over and earn his money in England, he went back and paid his rent. We did not know that that was the source from which the rent was paid. We did not know how much money came back from America to help to pay the rent. We did not know those facts; they were always stoutly denied. It was stoutly denied before the land valuers were appointed that there was rack-renting. It was as stoutly denied last year that there was any ground for the complaints and Bill of the hon. Member for Cork. What did the Cowper Commission do? They proved the case of the hon. Member up to the hilt. It is because these facts have come to light that your remedy of coercion is out of date and no longer applicable. The fact is, that you cannot put back the history of Ireland; you cannot replace her institutions as they stood; you cannot put her people where they were. If you intended not to listen to the voice of the Catholics it is far better that Parliament had never emancipated the Catholics. If you intended to take your stand on the old and despotic principle of ascendancy, backed by coercion, it would have been far better if you had never disestablished the Irish Church. If you did not intend to listen to the voice of the Irish electors it was far better that you should not have given the Irish people the suffrage, because to do those things was only to make the promise to the ear and break it to the hope. These things have been done; they are past recall; and that is why coercion is out of date. Then you complain that you are obliged to have this measure of coercion, because if you do not have it you are simply handing over the government of Ireland to the followers of the hon. Member for Cork. I believe the present measure is more calculated to rivet the government of Ireland upon the hon. Member for Cork and those who follow him, than anything that you could possibly have done. I deny that any measure that was proposed from the side that followed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian would have had a tendency to hand the government over to the hon. Member and his followers; it would have handed the government over to the people of Ireland. The Government Followers are never tired of telling the House and the country that there is a vast minority of the people of Ireland who disapprove the policy of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and who approve of theirs. One of the greatest authorities on your side has told us that, out of less than 5,000,000 of people in Ireland, there are at least 2,000,000 who abhor the rule of the National League and long to be set free; who are loyal and clinging with devotion to the Act of Union. Well, why do not the 2,000,000 speak out? When we are told that these 2,000,000 are not the least educated section, not the least thrifty, not the least trustworthy portion of the population of Ireland—what a noble faith we must have all had in the working of free institutions when such a minority, containing the intelligence, the wealth, the good habits of the population cannot be trusted to take care of themselves against a majority of 3,000,000, who are the more ignorant, the poorer, and the least intelligent part of the community. When the great reforms which have been carried in England were started, I wonder whether there was such a minority as 2,000,000 against 3,000,000 only to contend against. What are the Government doing for these 2,000,000 which they speak of as being so loyal and devoted to their system of government? I will tell the Government what I think they were doing for them. You are preparing an evil future for them. You are teaching them not to rely upon themselves, not to learn to take their own part in politics, not to learn to find a *modus vivendi* with the rest of their own countrymen; but whenever things go in the direction in which they did not like them to go, they have nothing to do but to cry over to England for more coercion, more soldiers, and more police. Some hon. Gentlemen opposite, at all events, know that call it by what name you like, it will not be many years before some Liberal scheme of local government in Ireland will have to be passed. How are you preparing this minority now to take their part then? Do the Government think that they will call out public spirit, independence, self-reliance, under the shadow of coercion? No, you would silence, perhaps, hon. Members from Ireland and their supporters; but you would effectually smother any growing self-reliance among those whom you look upon as your friends. Well, the Government will perhaps pass this Bill. [*Cries of* "Hear, hear!"] Yes, I think you will; but you have not received a mandate from the country to pass it. Do the Government think this is the "end all and be all" of their coercion? Do they think they have arrived at the end of it when this Bill is passed? They will only be at the beginning of it! The Government cannot bear to hear hon. Members below the Gangway speak in Ireland; and do they think that after passing this Bill they will long tolerate their presence in the House! And what then? The Government will be driven on from one step to another of coercion until the people of this country may at last pull them up in their course. The Liberals know this tree of coercion, and they know its fruits; and they are quite sure of one thing, and that is that they will gather no grapes from that thorn. Some persons have been, as I think, rash enough to say to the Irish people that they hope they will resist this law if it is passed. I differ totally and entirely from that advice. I say to Irishmen—and particularly to Irish Members—that I think it behoves them to use every effort they can to prevent in the future any justification of an Act which has no justification now. I say to them — "I hope you will strain every nerve to prevent this Act from obtaining the sanction in the exercise which is lacking to it in the enactment." I do not believe they will have to wait very long. My belief is, that the mind of the people of this country is being quickly made up. I believe the people of this country desire peace with Ireland. It has been a long struggle and a long quarrel; but the people of this country have recognized that there has been much injustice in the past, and they desire peace now. I would quote, as being applicable to this case, the noble words that were used upon a not dissimilar occasion, when England, to the cry of "No surrender" to the rebel American Colonists, was rushing to disaster. The peace which is desired now, and it was desired then, was—

> "Not to be sought through the medium of war, or through the tedious labyrinth of endless negotiations; but peace, simple peace, to be sought in its ordinary course and in its accustomed haunts—peace to be sought in the interests of peace and by methods purely pacific."

That is not the course which the Government are pursuing towards Ireland; these are not the methods with which they are now treating that country. I trust that the disaster which England suffered when such advice was neglected in 1775 will not be repeated now.

Mr. FORREST FULTON (West Ham, N.): There is nothing more remarkable in connection with the embittered controversy which is being waged over this Bill than the demoralizing effect which it appears to have upon those who are opposed to the Government. Only the other day the hon. and learned Member for the City of York (Mr. Lockwood) denounced the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) because he had ventured to repudiate, somewhat warmly, a monstrous suggestion that he had deliberately incited the police to acts of violence in order to give colour for the introduction of this Bill. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) laid down another proposition of a most extraordinary character for a responsible statesman, and a Member of the Privy Council, to put forward. The right hon. Gentleman in the debate the other night to grant urgency for this Bill, denied in the most emphatic terms that it is the first duty of an Executive Government to enforce the law—good or bad. "The first duty of the Government," said the right hon. Gentleman, "is to amend and alter the law." Now, I venture to say that such a proposition is absolutely incapable of any defence whatever, and it shows, to my mind, an alarming incapacity on the part of the right hon. Gentleman to distinguish between the science of jurisprudence, which is the science of law as it is, and the science of legislation, which is the science of law as it ought to be. The Executive Government are concerned only with the law as it is; they have nothing to do with the law as it ought to be. It is their duty to enforce the law. It is the duty of Parliament to amend and alter the law. The proposition of the right hon. Gentleman is incapable of any defence whatever, and I do not think that I ought to trouble myself longer with the utterances of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman has stripped himself bare of every rag of political consistency, and he stands before the House and before the country metaphorically naked and obtrusively unashamed. Perhaps the most remarkable example of the demoralization to which I referred in my opening remarks has been afforded by the speech of the hon. Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread). The hon. Member said, that it was idle to suggest a minority of 2,000,000 out of 5,000,000 could not, and would not, be able to protect itself. I cannot think that the hon. Gentleman can have seriously considered the effect of his observations, because, if he had only referred to the result of the Irish Elections, he would have seen that the 2,000,000 only returned 13 Members to this House, while the 3,000,000 returned 85. I assume that no method of redistribution could possibly produce any other result in regard to an Irish Parliament than it has produced in reference to the Imperial Parliament; and I fail to see how in a House of Commons consisting of 101 Members, 13 Members can by any possibility defend their rights and interests in a Constitutional manner. It is obvious, therefore, that the minority of 2,000,000 represented by 13 Members returned by the Northern Province in a Home Rule Parliament would be absolutely at the mercy of the 85 Members returned by the majority of 3,000,000 from the East, West, and South of Ireland; and I do not see what course would be open to them, except a resort to armed force, for the protection of that wealth and property which it is very rightly said they possess. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley), at a meeting held recently in the Victoria Hall, did me the honour to refer to a speech which I delivered on the second night, I think, of the present Session, and he said he was prepared to bet 100 to 1 that I would vote for the Bill. I hope that he was able to get a good many of his supporters to take the odds, because it is certainly my intention to support the Government. Not only did the right hon. Gentleman make that generous offer, but he asserted that a large number of hon. Members of this House have made statements and declarations which are not in accordance with the principles of this Bill. Now, I believe that so far as I am personally concerned, I shall be able to show that I have said nothing that is in any way inconsistent with my Election pledges. So far as the Bill itself is concerned, with one exception, every one of its provisions is contained directly or indirectly in the existing law of England or Scotland, and the only exception is the provision which relates to the change of venue and the removal of trials from Ireland to this country. It is said that this Bill is one for the abolition of trial by jury. I deny that altogether. I particularly desire to point out that it rests entirely with hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, whether the provisions of this Bill shall be put in force at all. One of the provisions of the Bill is, that not a single one of the provisions of the Bill shall take effect except by virtue of the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant and the Privy Council of Ireland, that a particular district in which the measure is put in force is in such a condition to warrant resort to the exceptional powers of the measure. If the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), and the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) will only turn over a new leaf; if they will do what they have never yet done—namely, commence to denounce outrage from one end of Ireland to the other; if they are willing to accept the decision of the highest Court in Ireland—the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice — that the Plan of Campaign is illegal; if they are prepared to denounce Boycotting — in a word, if they are only prepared to use the great influence which they undoubtedly possess in Ireland in the directions I have indicated, I am quite satisfied that no provision of this Bill need ever or will ever be enforced. I do not know whether that is too much to expect; but, at any rate, one feels a sort of hope that the hon. Member for West Belfast, who we know is possessed of so much natural eloquence and love of his country, will possibly in the future adopt the course I have ventured to suggest to him, and which is a complete and satisfactory way of disposing of this Bill. It is quite plain that if Ireland is only peaceful and contented, Her Majesty's Government would not desire to enforce any one of the provisions of the Bill. That being so, let us consider for a moment the suggestions with regard to the powers of the magistrates. I am bound to say I feel great interest in the proposal to exclusively empower Stipendiary or Resident Magistrates with summary jurisdiction. There is absolutely nothing new in the principle of extending the powers which are vested in magistrates. On the contrary, the tendency of modern legislation has been to increase the power of magistrates to deal summarily with various classes of offences. At the same time, I feel there is some need of amendment with regard to intrusting exclusively to Resident Magistrates —the great bulk of whom have really no acquaintance with the technical provisions of the law—the power of administering the provisions of an Act of Parliament which is not more reremarkable for clearness of expression than Acts of Parliament usually are. It appears to me that in that respect, and also with regard to the question of appeal, it will be necessary to introduce Amendments in Committee. It is certainly a safeguard for the liberty of the subject that it should not be by summary jurisdiction before two magistrates only that imprisonment should take place, but that the accused should in addition have the right of appeal. But the method of appeal, namely—to Quarter Sessions is most objectionable, for, assuming that the Bill, in its present form, should pass into law either in the month of June or July, there would be no possibility of imposing any punishment on any person, if the right of appeal was exercised in the way suggested, until the October Quarter Sessions. Looking through the provisions of the Bill, it certainly occurred to me that this is a question which will require very careful consideration. I consider there is a blot in this measure with regard to that matter; and if no more experienced Member of the House does so, I shall feel it my duty to place an Amendment on the Paper for the purpose of giving the right of appeal, but not in the manner and way in which it is proposed in the Bill to give it. There is another portion of this Bill which has been very severely criticized, but which, in my judgment, forms the best provision in the whole Bill—that is the provision to remove trials for grave and serious crimes — murder, attempts to murder, arson, firing into dwellings, aggravated assaults upon the person—to this country. If I rightly understand hon. Members opposite, they complain most seriously of the system of packing juries in Ireland; in fact, I believe that an hon. Gentleman has given Notice of his intention to call attention to this system. I must say it is most revolting to my sense of justice and fairness that there can be by possibility any suggestion that in Ireland recourse is had to such an objectionable system. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) has pointed out that as half the jurors are objected to by the Crown and the other half by the accused, the consequence is that it is absolutely impossible in Ireland to get together a proper jury. Under these circumstances, it seems to me that, of all the provision of this Bill, the one which is most deserving of the serious consideration and the general support of hon. Members of this House, is the provision to remove cases such as I have enumerated to this country, so that a fair and impartial trial may be obtained. No one can suggest for a single moment—I am sure no hon. Member from Ireland will suggest—that in this country accused persons do not receive a fair and impartial trial. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle is particularly alarmed at this provision. Speaking—I think at the Victoria Hall—the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Just imagine what a terrible condition of things it will be to have peasants brought from the wilds of Connemara to the Old Bailey—peasants entirely ignorant of our procedure and language—and tried for the serious offence of murder."

Really, the right hon. Gentleman appears to be entirely ignorant of the fact that almost every day, in one or other of the Courts of this country, persons are tried who are perfectly ignorant of our procedure and of our language; that invariably there is the strongest possible tendency on the part of jurors in this country to strain the law in favour of persons of other nationalities tried here. Over and over again in my hearing, Judges—in charging juries in cases in which such persons have been on their trial — have said, in clear and distinct terms, that the jury ought to make allowance for the fact that the prisoners may possibly have acted to some degree in ignorance. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle appears to have been entirely oblivious of that fact. But there is one very remarkable instance, one which has not been mentioned in the course of this debate, but which created a great impression on my mind—the trial of O'Donnell at the Old Bailey for the murder of Carey. Hon. Members may recollect that owing to the fact of the murder of Carey having been committed on the high seas, and that part of the old Admiralty jurisdiction is vested by statute in the Central Criminal Court, the trial of O'Donnell took place at the Old Bailey. O'Donnell had the advantage of being defended by the most distinguished advocate at the English Bar, the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) who was Attorney General in the late Government. It is quite unnecessary to say that everything which could by possibility be urged in O'Donnell's favour was urged; but, after a long and patient trial, a verdict of guilty was returned. Now, I do not hesitate to affirm that if that trial had taken place in Ireland, no jury would have dared to bring in a verdict of guilty. [Mr. M. J. KENNY: Why not?] If Carey had been murdered in Ireland before he set his foot on board the vessel which was to convey him to a distant part of the world, and if it had happened that the trial had taken place before an Irish jury in Dublin or any other place, so strong was the feeling against the man, so strong were the political feelings aroused in the matter, that I am perfectly satisfied there would have been a miscarriage of justice. No one detests the memory of the man Carey more than I do. He was a man deserving of no sympathy; but of the fact that he was murdered there could be no possibility of doubt, and the jury at the Central Criminal Court found

O'Donnell guilty of the crime. The trial created a great impression on my mind, and, seeing that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in the Crimes Act of 1882, that the trial of such cases should take place before two Irish Judges, and that that solution was found to be unworkable by reason of the protest of the Judges themselves, it brought home to me the strong conviction that the proper and the only solution of the difficulty was to remove the trials to this country. There is another argument which seems very strongly in favour of this portion of the Bill. There has existed for some time on the Statute Book of this country an Act which enables any prisoner to have his trial removed from any portion of England or Wales to the Old Bailey if he can show there is such a feeling in his own district that a fair trial cannot be obtained; and the Crown have the same power in all similar cases. I believe that one of the effects of this provision—this necessary provision—will be to deter people from committing the graver kinds of crime. The great difficulty in the administration of justice in Ireland has been the uncertainty which has attended trials from time to time, and the fact that criminals in Ireland can reckon that, in all probability, a jury will not find them guilty. I know Ireland well —my father was an Irishman, and I am connected with the country in many ways—and I have a strong suspicion that the very appearance of this measure upon the Statute Book will be quite sufficient for the shrewd Irish peasant, and that it will be very seldom necessary to put it into force. I do most earnestly hope Her Majesty's Government will adhere to this particular provision; that they will not be deterred by what I cannot help thinking are the sentimental objections of some hon. Members who sit around me. It is said that the adoption of this provision would create the greatest *furore* in Ireland, that criminals would be escorted to the deck of the vessels by cheering crowds, and that they would leave the shores of Ireland with the benedictions of disloyal priests. I do not think that result will be brought about; indeed, I should say the Executive Government in Ireland would be very greatly to blame if they gave an opportunity for any such indecent displays. Mr. Speaker, I have referred to these matters at some length, because I have been exceedingly anxious to deal, if I could, with matters which have not been to any very considerable extent dealt with by hon. Members who have preceded me in debate. There is probably nothing so difficult and so wearisome as to rise in a debate which has lasted now some eight or nine days, and deal with a measure which does not seem to be seriously opposed by hon. Members from Ireland. Hon. Members below the Gangway opposite seem to me to regard this Bill with favour, because they never rise to address the House. I have not noticed that such modesty has distinguished them on previous occasions. I have heard many of them on very many occasions—some of them with very great pleasure, some of them with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain. Judging from their attitude upon this Bill we can only suppose that they regard the measure, as I regard it, as a fair and reasonable solution of the question. Evidently they do not agree with hon. Members who sit upon the Front Opposition Bench; but with the shrewdness which distinguishes them they see the fallacy of all the arguments which have been addressed to the House by right hon. Gentlemen opposite. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to feel that the arguments used by my hon. Friends who have preceded me have convinced the Members from Ireland of the reasonableness of the provisions of the Bill. Perhaps I may be allowed to say a few further words upon the portion of the Bill which deals with the summary jurisdiction of magistrates. It is exceedingly unfortunate, in my opinion, that two magistrates should deal with the cases contemplated. I should much prefer that there should be either one magistrate or three, to avoid the possibility of a weak man being controlled by one of stronger will. Then, again, the mysterious provision towards the end of the Bill about the Lord Lieutenant is certainly unwise. No one has a more profound respect for the Lord Lieutenant than I have, but I never heard it suggested he had any peculiar acquaintance with the law. It is said the Lord Lieutenant is to discover in each and every case a Resident Magistrate who is more or less acquainted with the law. Knowing what I do of Resident Magistrates in Ireland, I feel that this is a provision which will require some consideration in Committee. Mr. Speaker, in looking through Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, I came across the following passage:—

> "To make a Government requires no great prudence; settle the seat of power, teach obedience, and the work is done. To give freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide, it only requires to let go the rein. But to form a free Government, that is to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful and combining mind."

It is because I feel in my soul and on my conscience that this Bill, when it receives the Royal Assent, will tend to form a free Government once more in Ireland by the re-establishment of the authority of the law, and will tend to temper together those opposite elements of liberty and restraint, that I shall give the proposals of Her Majesty's Government my unflinching and unwavering support.

Mr. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): One of the reasons hon. Members sitting on these Benches have not, so far, taken a prominent part in opposing this measure in the House is that they have been engaged, and are at present engaged, in opposing it where they may do so more effectually. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for West Ham (Mr. Forrest Fulton) welcomes that portion of the Bill which we very strongly object to—namely, the provision to change the venue to England. I am not at all surprised at that, seeing that the hon. and learned Gentleman must have a very pleasing vision of future celebrity as a prosecuting counsel at the Old Bailey. Now, Sir, the hon. and learned Member dwelt at some length upon the propriety of bringing Irish peasants, who have been referred to by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley), to England for trial, and he has given as one of his reasons for so doing that strangers and foreigners are more fairly dealt with by English juries than persons who belong to this country. He regards Irishmen, including himself, as foreigners. I have no particular objection to that assumption on his part; but I would only remind the hon. and learned Gentleman and the House of the very latest case of anything like importance that has been decided in the English Courts—namely, the case of a filibustering expedition to Venezuela, in which a foreigner was convicted, while an Englishman was acquitted. But I will refer later to the general question of the transference of trials to England. Now, Sir, the hon. and learned Member also said there was no part of this Bill for which there could not be some parallel found either in the laws of England or Scotland. It has been stated that the examination of witnesses by private inquisition is based on the law of Scotland. As a matter of fact, the law of Scotland with regard to this inquiry is essentially different to the proposals now made by the Government. I have looked up as far as I could the law of Scotland on this point. I may, of course, be mistaken; but I have consulted what I understand to be the best authorities—namely, *Bell's Digest of the Law*, and McDonald's *Criminal Law of Scotland*. What do I find? Why, as I have said, that in many essential particulars the law of Scotland on this point is different to the law it is proposed to make. In the first place, in Scotland examination must be conducted by the Judge Ordinary or Justice of the Peace, and under the superintendence of the Procurator Fiscal. In Ireland, this inquiry will be conducted by Resident Magistrates. Investigation in Scotland is perfectly *ex parte*, and witnesses are not usually put upon oath. Under this Bill witnesses in Ireland are to be put on oath. Furthermore, in Scotland the accused is not admitted to the inquiry, and the accused party cannot be put on oath. It is not necessary to have an accused party under this Bill, but it is necessary to have an accused party according to the Scottish law. No person need be accused under this Bill, but you may bring up an accused person, you may put him on oath and compel him to make statements which may even criminate himself. I am informed by a Scotch lawyer that under the Scottish law witnesses need not answer any criminating question. Again, any reasonable suggestion on the part of the accused to call witnesses may be acted upon in Scotland; but there is no such provision in this Bill. It has been repeatedly dwelt upon in the course of this discussion, particularly by legal Gentlemen speaking from the Front Treasury Bench, that the real value of this proposal may be judged from the effect which it had in bringing to justice certain persons who were concerned in criminal proceedings in Ireland in 1882, 1883, and 1884. I altogether deny that this clause in the Act of 1882 had that effect. It is said that it was under this clause that the Phœnix Park assassins were brought to justice. I deny that altogether. I believe I am right in stating that Joe Brady was summoned 23 times before Judge Curran in the Lower Castle Yard, and that Judge Curran could not find a single particle of evidence against him. It was by a mere accident—by an accidental description given by a servant girl to a policeman—that the discovery was brought about. Inquiries were then being made with regard to the attempted assassination of Mr. Field; and at the time there was not the slightest indication that the persons concerned in the attempt upon the life of Mr. Field had anything to do with the Phœnix Park assassinations. These private inquiries did not bring any person to justice; but they had the effect, in one or two cases, of bringing about convictions such as the Crossmaglen convictions, which we claim to be unjust. What occurred in the Crossmaglen, the Crusheen, and the Tubbercurry cases, is sufficient to account for our opposition to the clause. There were certain persons arrested under the Act of 1882 in County Clare. They were imprisoned in the Ennis gaol, kept there for a very long time—some of them for nearly three months—and the head of the Criminal Investigation Department in Dublin was sent down, and went from cell to cell endeavouring to induce the men to give evidence against each other. None of them did so, and the consequence was they had to be liberated. The Tubbercurry prisoners were kept in gaol for nearly four months, and a man was turned amongst them for the purpose of inducing them to become informers. When the men had been kept in gaol for four months, they were brought to Dublin for trial. The jury acquitted Fitzgerald, and the other cases were not proceeded with. This clause can only be used in future as in the past—namely, for the purpose of endeavouring to make out cases and procuring convictions in cases where no case whatever should be made out, and where convictions should not consequently be obtained. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for West Ham said that the Irish Members ought to go through Ireland and denounce outrage. Is there more outrage in Ireland than in England? Surely it is just as pertinent for me to advise the hon. Gentleman to go about England denouncing crime as it was for him to tell us to go through Ireland for such a purpose. We have always condemned outrage in Ireland; but, at the same time, we claim—and with a full show of reason on our side, because we are supported in the matter by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland—that there is not now an abnornal amount of crime in Ireland. When coercion was brought forward in former times, there had been a number of murders and other outrages, and the Government were able to make out a decent pretext for the introduction of coercive legislation. What is there at the present time? The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland himself considers that there is nothing exceptional exhibited by the criminal statistics. In introducing this Bill, the right hon. Gentleman said—"We do not rest our case upon statistics of agrarian crime in Ireland;" but he immediately proceeded to refer to the crime of other descriptions which has occurred in Ireland. For the first time, the general and ordinary crime of Ireland is given as a reason for bringing in a Bill of this most extraordinary and iniquitous character. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that we are not to consider the amount of crime in Ireland, but that we were to consider it with reference to its character, and the sources from which it sprung. But that is exactly what we want to do. If the right hon. Gentleman goes to the source of crime in Ireland, he will find it is due to the action of bad landlords; and, consequently, if he will study the agrarian question with a view to settling it on a fair basis, he will see that I am justified in saying that there can be no pretext for this exceptional legislation. Sir, I ask those Gentlemen who are responsible for this Bill, to give us some reason why, in the face of their own statements, and the acknowledgments made by right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench, they abandoned coercion in 1885. The right hon. Gentleman alleges that nothing new has been said on the question. I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman who is now engaged in a Conference the object of which is to draw more closely together the outlying parts of the Empire, should come down and support this Bill, directed against a people whom it is the interest of Englishmen to pacify, by arguments which will make it absolutely impossible to bring about at the present time amity and general union. He said that in 1882 the amount of agrarian crime was in excess of anything that now prevails; but that the statistics of crime showed that there was a steady increase during the last three years. Now, I altogether deny that there has been any such increase, and I will, before sitting down, attempt to prove the contrary from the same sources as those on which the right hon. Gentleman bases his assertion. The hon. Gentleman who spoke early in the debate to-night seems to rest his support of the Bill on the exceptional prevalence of Boycotting notices in Ireland. He said that intimidation and Boycotting were had recourse to in Ireland to compel the people to join the National League; but I submit that he altogether failed to make out a case, and that he did not bring forward a single authentic instance of a person being Boycotted in that way. We know that there were, by the admission of the Government, 800 persons Boycotted when this Bill was brought forward; and we know that, when the Conservatives were in power in 1885, at the time they relinquished the policy of governing Ireland by coercion, there were many more than 800 persons Boycotted. There are cases given with reference to Boycotting now which have absolutely no foundation in fact. It seems that nothing is thought to be more profitable than sending accounts to English newspapers of Boycotting in Ireland. There was an account sent the other day of a man named Kelly having been shot at and wounded in the hand, while on his way from Banbridge to Laurencetown. But a letter appeared in the *The Northern Whig*, which expressed the surprise of the inhabitants at the report, and which went on to say that the statement was absolutely untrue, and without any foundation whatever; that the man was well known, and on the evening in question he was met by several persons between 6.30 and 7 o'clock p.m., when he was greatly intoxicated and scarcely able to walk. The probability is that the man fell and injured himself. Well, Sir, appended to this letter in *The Northern Whig* is this statement—

> "The paragraph to which our correspondent refers was forwarded to us by the Press Association."

This is one example of the way in which reports of outrages spread about, which outrages are entirely unfounded in fact. With regard to the number of indictable offences in Ireland, what is the state of affairs? In 1885 the total number of indictable offences during the three months of April, May, and June, during which the Crimes Act was in force, was 1,856, and there were 886 arrests made. The total number in October, November, and December, when the days were short, and when we might naturally consider that the number of offences would have been greater, was 1,809, and the number of arrests was 1,079. But let it be remembered that during those months the Crimes Act was not in force, and yet there was a distinct increase in the number of persons arrested, although the number of offences was less. This shows that the Bill, even if it comes into operation, will not increase the efficacy of the Criminal Law, and secure a greater number of convictions. Then, as to malicious offences against property. The total number of these in 1885 was 785, and the number of arrests 88. It is very difficult to get convictions in cases of offences against property, and there is no machinery in the Bill by which it would be possible to get a greater number of convictions for these alleged crimes. I would recommend the Government, however, to find out some means of preventing unscrupulous persons damaging their own property, and saying that they are the victims of outrage. Taking the second quarter of the year 1885, the number of offences against property was 192, and the number of arrests 11; and in the last quarter of the year there 215 offences and 40 arrests—that is to say, that the number of arrests was four times as great as when the Crimes Act was in operation. For killing and maiming cattle, included in the foregoing, only two arrests were made during the time coercion was in force; whereas when the Act was not in force there were five arrests. Therefore, I say that this Bill cannot increase the number of persons brought to trial for offences against property, having regard to the fact that coercion in 1885 had no effect in bringing offenders to justice. I come now to offences against the person. Of course, the number of these is much larger than of those against property. The total number of these in 1885 was 1,276, and the number of arrests 1,564. When the Crimes Act was in force in April, May, and June there were 340 crimes committed, and the number of arrests was 404. In the last quarter, when the Act was not in force, there were 351 crimes committed, and 457 arrests. Again, we see that the number of arrests was greater when there was no coercion in operation. Well, Sir, the total number of all indictable offences for the year ending the 31st of December, 1885, was 6,961, and the number of arrests 3,594 ; of the latter, 998 were discharged for want of evidence, and in 396 cases there was no prosecution; the number of committals for trial being 1,241, or one committal for 5·53 offences. It was in the face of those figures that the Tory Government of the day abandoned coercion. Now, with regard to murders. Exclusive of the murders of infants, there were 18 during 1885; there being 12 arrests when the Act was in force, and 26 when it was not in force. —a fact which shows that, in the absence of coercion, the people were brought round more in favour of the law. There were discharged, for want of evidence, 29 persons, and no one for want of prosecution. In 1886 the number of murders and homicides was 7. I believe that when Lord Russell was in power his Government brought in a Coercion Bill, and it was stated at the time that there had been 200 murders in the course of the year. Therefore, I say that, comparing that time with the present, it is clear that the Government are adopting an extreme course in bringing in this Bill. From the way in which the Government speak of trial by jury, one would imagine that juries in Ireland never convict, that a man had only to be brought before a jury to be acquitted ; but let us see how the result of trial by jury in Ireland compares with that in England. I have looked over the figures relating to convictions by Irish juries, and I find that in 1876 there were 67·8 per cent of convictions and 32·2 per cent of acquittals; in 1880, 69·5 per cent of convictions and 30·5 per cent of acquittals; in 1885, 73·5 per cent of convictions and 26·5 per cent of acquittals. Now, in the case of English juries, I find that during the five years —1880-4—the percentage of acquittals was 22·23, as against 20·5 per cent in the case of juries in Ireland. Assuming that the number of acquittals in England was exactly that which justice required, we may infer, on account of the excessive number of convictions in Ireland, that our contention that persons have been convicted in Ireland who ought not to have been convicted, is justified. Taking the number of threatening letters—which is one of the offences cited in support of the Bill—I find there were, in 1885, 710 cases, as against 3,093 in 1881, and 2,651 in 1882, when the Crimes Bill was introduced; so that, in one of those years, there were four times, and in the other three times, as many as are cited against us. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland said that during the last three years the statistics showed a formidable list of crime and a steady increase in the number of crimes. Now, the Report of Mr. Grimshaw, the Registrar General, says that the statement I have quoted—

> "Shows that in 1885 the total number of serious crimes was much below the average of the previous six years, and that decrease extended through all the classes of such crimes."

This statement of Mr. Grimshaw, I submit, disposes of the right hon. Gentleman's statement, because he shows that the fact is exactly opposite to that which the Chief Secretary has put forward; and I lay stress upon this point, because Mr. Grimshaw is the official witness with whose evidence the right hon. Gentleman supports his case. Now, with regard to cases in which claims have been made for malicious injuries. Many of these claims are dishonest, and intended as a profitable speculation. Take the case of cattle alleged to have been stolen in Kerry. Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the cattle which were removed, and in respect of which presentments were made, were found alive and well on the property of Lord Kenmare? I will give another instance. At the last Presentment Sessions in Kerry a man made a claim for compensation on account of his dwelling-house having been maliciously pulled down. Now, on the 9th of December last a terrific storm swept over that part of Ireland, which was the cause of the damage which this man alleged was maliciously done. I happened to go through a great portion of the County of Clare next day, after the storm, and I saw an enormous number of partially unroofed houses. The claim which this man made was rejected by the Presentment Sessions, and he appealed to the Grand Jury, who also, by 21 votes, again rejected it. Here, then, is a case bearing on the list quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. How are these Courts constituted? We know that the Grand Jury is invariably composed of landlords and their agents; and the Presentment Sessions, on which the right hon. Gentleman seems to place much reliance, are composed of a certain number of local magistrates and associated cess payers; out of 12 of the latter summoned six only are down, so that the number holding popular opinions can never exceed that number. I repeat that people injure their own houses and cattle and then make claims before the Grand Juries and Presentment Sessions, that these claims are allowed, and that in this way they reap a profit on their own crime and infamy. This is a practice regularly resorted to in Ireland, and it is the reason why there are so many cases of destroying and maiming cattle the perpetrators of which are undiscovered. I am not disposed to minimize the evil, or excuse persons who adopt the practice; but I say that you ought not to apply coercion for the sake of attempting to deal with this state of things, and which I contend this Bill, if it becomes law, will not be able to cope with. An hon. Gentleman who spoke in favour of the Bill said it would be limited in its operation. Of course, it will be limited. I do not suppose that the Government will ever apply its provisions in Ulster; nor do I suppose that the Irish Government will have the audacity to apply any part of it to the County of Tyrone, for the evidence taken before the Commission is sufficient to prove that there is no justification for such a course. But if the Bill is to be limited in its scope to a few discreditable proceedings in Clare and Kerry, I ask whether that is a sufficient reason to justify the Government for occupying the time of the House of Commons during several months with this legislation—time which might be much more profitably employed in dealing with the Land Question? The argument that the Bill will not apply to many parts of Ireland is one which justifies us in a course of vigorous opposition to the Bill. We have heard a great deal about terrorism, intimidation, and anarchy in Ireland; but I submit that, although these words are very easily used, no proof has been given of their existence; and the same may be said with regard to the statement that the Queen's writ does not run in Ireland. I should like to know in what part of Ireland the Queen's writ does not run. We know that men occupying the most sacred position among the people have been arrested; and that such an arrest, in one case, created a ferment which gave a pretext to the police to attack the people, when a man lost his life. We have been asked to point out anything in the Report of the Royal Commissioners which would justify our opposition to this Bill; but I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman opposite to find anything in the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller to justify that Bill itself. We altogether refuse to accept the verdict of the Commissioners as to the state of Ireland; and I strongly dissuade the House of Commons from accepting the verdict of men who are avowedly attached to the landlord interest in Ireland. When Sir Redvers Buller was examined before the Commission, he was asked whether intimidation was lessened? And he replied—

> "I think but little. . . . My view of the country is this—that the majority of tenants meant to pay rents, and where they could pay them, did pay them, but that the rents have been too high."

When asked for suggestions in regard to the disturbed state of Kerry and Clare, Sir Redvers Buller said—

> "I feel it very strongly that in this part of the country you can never have peace, unless you create some legal equipoise or legal equivalent that will supply the want of freedom of contract that now exists between the landlord and the tenant."

There was nothing in the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller to justify the introduction of this atrocious Coercion Bill, although there was plenty in it to justify the passing of a Land Bill. He concluded his evidence by using these striking words, that in the districts which are disturbed—

> "You have got a very ignorant, poor people, and the law should look after them; instead of which, it has only looked after the rich—that, at least, appears to me to be the case."

I, Sir, as an Ulster Member, base my opposition to the Bill, not on the Report of the three landlords and Sir James Caird—who, I am sorry to say, was associated with it—but on the Report of Mr. Knipe, who is an Ulster tenant farmer, and one of the class of men who have not supported me hitherto—but who will probably see their way to do so in the future. I shall be surprised if, after the reception this gentleman's Report has received, we do not, in the future, have the Presbyterians at our back. He declares that an attempt to meet the crime and outrage that prevailed in some districts by fresh coercion would only end in seriously aggravating the present condition of things; and he wound up by saying that it will be a serious matter, with grievances unredressed, to attempt, by force, to repress the right of the tenants to assemble together for the discussion of their affairs. With regard to the Judges' Charges, upon which the Attorney General for Ireland bases his case for coercion, we have received many tributes to the peaceful state of the country from those learned gentlemen. It is true that Mr. Justice O'Brien, in Clare, said that law there seemed to have ceased to exist; but Mr. Justice O'Brien was in the district two days. Well, I was there from September until the opening of the Session of Parliament; and, therefore, ought to know more about the matter than Mr. Justice O'Brien; and when anyone says that Clare has become a lawless county, that the Queen's writ does not run there, and that intimidation and terrorism prevail, I say that that is not the fact. I have been engaged in carrying out the Plan of Campaign in Clare; and, from my experience, I assert that any disturbance that has occurred has been due to the action of the landlords, and not to the action of the tenantry, or their leaders. If you refuse to the tenants the right to combine, what will you do in regard to combination on the part of the landlords—and in Ulster landlords can combine with some effect? A gentleman named John Love, of Castlederg, an ex-Sub-Commissioner under the Land Act, was examined before the Royal Commission. He was asked by Sir James Caird—

> "Is there a combination of any kind in this part of the country?"

And he replied—

> "There is no combination except the combination on the part of the landlords to defeat the Act."

I should like to know whether this Bill is to be put in force against landlords who may combine to defeat Acts of Parliament as the landlords in Ulster have done? Sir James Caird asked—

> "Do you think it will come to this part of the country?"

And the witness replied—

> "I do not think that amongst a Presbyterian population you will ever see anything of the sort. The Presbyterians are the beasts of burden."

I see there are Members of the Unionist Party who are going to support this Bill, who were at one time opposed to coercion. There is, for instance, the Member for one of the Divisions of Scotland sitting below me (Mr. Sinclair), who was once elected by the Liberal voters of Antrim as an anti-Coercionist. He pledged himself then to oppose coercion; but now that he represents a Scotch Unionist constituency, he turns round and——

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I beg, at once, to state that what the hon. Member has said is not in accordance with the facts. At the time of my election for Antrim, I did not pledge myself to vote against coercion. I remember I said then what I have always said—namely, that I held myself free to judge of the facts that were laid before me by the Government of the day; and that whilst I was very strongly opposed to anything in the nature of coercive legislation, yet that I would not pledge myself to any course until I knew what the facts were on which I was asked to join in that policy.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: That is substantially what I said. He was elected at a time when it was proposed, I believe, to renew some of the provisions of the Act of 1882, and he was supported in his candidature by Mr. Thomas Dixon, a strenuous anti-Coercionist. I claim for this Bill that it is a measure not for the purpose of putting down crime, because crime, substantially, does not exist in Ireland, but that it is a Bill for the purpose of keeping up rent. As to its probable effects, I listened with pleasure, almost with reverence, to the words which fell from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) to-night. He told hon. Members on these Benches to exercise what control we possess over the people of Ireland to prevent them from losing their temper under the operation of this measure. In reply, Sir, I will say this—that so far as we are concerned we will spare no effort for the purpose of keeping the people of Ireland as quiet as we possibly can, even under the application of coercion. The Irish people are conscious of the fact that this measure can only subsist so long as the present Government subsists, and they are beginning to recognize, and most of them have already recognized, not only in the North, but also in the South of Ireland, that a better time is coming, and that they can well afford to suffer for a few months, or even for a few years, under a coercion *régime*, rather than do anything which, in the future, could justify the existence of this measure. In conclusion, I would remind the House of the simile of the late Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. John Morley). Dean Swift once wrote that—

> "Oppression maketh a wise man mad. The reason some people are not mad is because they are not wise."

There is some truth in that phrase; but we will be warned and will endeavour to keep the people from that madness which would result in disorder, and would delay the remedies for Irish discontent, and postpone the day that we know to be near at hand when the Irish people will be free in the enjoyment of their own government.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Sir William Harcourt,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *To-morrow.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 1.]

(*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Jackson.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 24th March.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Abolition of distinctions between certain Judgeships).

Mr. M. J. Kenny

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I observe that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), who has the first Amendment on the Paper, is not in his place. I should like to know what course the Government intend to take with regard to this Bill?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I am not surprised to find the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) is not in his place. I have had some communication with him in regard to this subject, and though I am very unwilling to narrate a private conversation in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman, I think I am justified in saying that the right hon. Gentleman is not disposed to look unfavourably on the proposal which I made to him, which was that he should not press the Amendment he had on the Paper, which would have the effect of abolishing one of the Common Law Judges in Ireland; and that the Government, in return, would pledge themselves to bring in a Bill dealing in a broad and liberal spirit with the whole question of Irish Judicature as soon as they are able to do so. Hon. Gentlemen who have followed this question are aware that in 1885 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) brought in a Bill which dealt with the whole question. I am perfectly ready to acknowledge that I believe that Bill was meant to remedy a state of things which has long been recognized as an evil in Ireland—namely, the excess of strength in the Supreme Court of Judicature for the duties to be performed. We are prepared to deal with that question as the right hon. Gentleman was prepared, and when we get an opportunity of doing so, we shall be prepared to bring in a Bill which, in its main provisions, will not differ essentially from that the right hon. Gentleman himself proposed. Of course, as no one has moved the Amendment standing in the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, I should not be in Order in discussing it; but I may say that we are of opinion that the adoption of the Amendment will not facilitate the final settlement of the question. The Amendment would abolish one of the Judges who are necessary, and leave unabolished the Judges who are not necessary. In 1877 the number of Common Law Judges was reduced from 12 to 10; and when the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Childers) considered this question, he had to decide whether he would further reduce the number. He came to the conclusion that, keeping in view certain work these Judges had to perform, and the convenience of certain arrangements, it was not expedient, in the public interest, that the number should be further reduced; and I believe the experience of the last few months has confirmed the opinion then arrived at by the Government. The branches of the Irish Judicature which ought to be lopped off are not in the branch of Common Law, and this Bill does not propose to remove Judges who are necessary, but to take a step which will facilitate the fusion of the Common Law Division. The Bill is a substantial step in the way of reform, and if the House will allow it to pass in its present shape, we will bring in a Bill carrying out the remainder of the views, broadly speaking, of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Childers). We shall, in that manner, do much more to promote the object of Irish Judicature reform than if we were to introduce a crude and ill-considered proposal, not taking full account of the necessity of Irish administration.

THE CHAIRMAN: No Amendment has been moved, and therefore the Question before the Committee is, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Upon that Question, Mr. Courtney, I may say that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), who has an Amendment on the Paper, is not here tonight; but I can explain, in general terms, the part he and others interested in the matter take. I listened with great attention to the promise which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) has just made. I think I understood it; but if he will allow me to add one or two words and if he will express his concurrence with them, there will be no difference between us. In the Bill of 1885, which I had the honour of introducing, a considerable reduction in the strength of the Irish Judicature was proposed, to the extent of three or four Judges, but that reduction did not extend to the Common Law Judges. The right hon. Gentleman now undertakes at once—I do not mean to-morrow, but within a reasonable time during the present Session—to introduce a Bill practically carrying out this reduction, but not in the Common Law Judges. If I distinctly understand that the reduction I proposed will be made, while the right hon. Gentleman will not be tied down to all the other details of the Bill of 1885, I recommend the House to accept that as a fair arrangement, and I shall not move the Amendment of my right hon. Friend.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I entirely accept that version of my speech. I do not pledge myself as to the number of the reduction, but it will be three or four.

MR. T. M. HEALY: After what has been said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) it would be useless for us to attempt to proceed further with the opposition to this Bill. I cannot help saying, however, that I regard, with apprehension, the weakening of the Court of Appeal in Ireland. The most important cases which go to the Court of Appeal are land cases, and it is highly undesirable that that Court should consist of only three Judges, one of whom, the Lord Chancellor, is necessarily a Party man. The present Lord Chancellor (Lord Ashbourne) has fought the cause of Irish landlords with great ability in the House of Commons, and another of the three Judges is also a Tory. A smaller point I wish to mention is, that if the Common Pleas is abolished, it will be necessary to transfer from the Common Pleas Master to the Queen's Bench Master, the power of taxing election costs. Another point of importance is that suitors should be allowed to retain their suits in the Court in which they had laid them. For example, in Ireland the popular Party lay their writs in the Exchequer, because they believe they get law there; but the landlord Party lay their writs in the Common Pleas. A provision should certainly be made for exhausting pending cases in the Divisions which it is proposed to abolish.

Clause *agreed to.*

Clause 2 (Consolidation of the Common Law Divisions).

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): For the purpose of raising the question of the Taxing Master, I will move the omission of the words "at any time," in page 1, line 21. I take it that the Government are disposed to carry out the provision with regard to the Taxing Master. The words of the clause have a very wide character, and under them the Lord Lieutenant might make orders we do not contemplate.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 21, to leave out the words "at any time."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. HOLMES) (Dublin University): I would point out to the hon. and learned Gentleman that if the wording of the clause were made more narrow than it is by the omission which he proposes, it would be impossible to carry out the intention of the Bill. I trust the hon. and learned Gentleman will not think it necessary to press this Amendment.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should like to know what will be the position of the Masters of the Common Pleas when the fusion takes place?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): The object of the clause is to prescribe that the Masters of Courts of Common Pleas and Queen's Bench shall continue to be the Masters as long as they are in office.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Clause *agreed to.*

Clauses 3 to 6, inclusive, *agreed to.*

Preamble and Title *agreed to.*

Bill *reported,* without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. A. J. Balfour.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) I would ask the hon. and learned Attorney General whether the right will be preserved to suitors of having pending appeal cases tried in the ordinary way?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): Although I venture to think that the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman would be provided for by the Bill, still I believe that my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland is willing to consider in what way cases pending may be disposed of in the manner most convenient to the parties concerned.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

HYDE PARK CORNER (NEW STREETS) BILL.—[BILL 213.]

(*Mr. David Plunket, Mr. Jackson.*)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."—(*Mr. Plunket.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Commissioner of Works, if he will kindly say that the safety of the public will be provided for by the placing of refuges at the points suggested?

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): I have communicated with the police authorities on the subject.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

FIRST OFFENDERS (*re-committed*) BILL.

(*Mr. Howard Vincent, Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Hoare, Mr. Addison, Mr. Hastings, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Molloy.*)

[BILL 189.] COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): This appears to be a good Bill so far as England is concerned; but I think that any proposal to enlarge the discretion of magistrates ought to be severely criticized. Our constant experience in Ireland is, that magistrates discriminate and differentiate as between persons who come before them. As an instance of this, take the notorious case of the threatening-letter writer at Wicklow. I say that our experience leads us to believe that the magistrates, whose power is to be enlarged by this Bill, will discriminate, and while they apply the Bill to juvenile offenders of the richer classes, they will send Tom, Dick, and Harry to reformatories. I say that all the reforms which contemplate the application of existing English law to Ireland are simply abused, and I do not believe that this Act will be honestly administered. I believe it may be corruptly administered by the "Great Unpaid." As an Irish Member, I think we ought to have our say in this matter; and, therefore, I think it desirable that the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) should give us a little time for looking into the Bill before it goes into Committee. So far as I am concerned, I guarantee that it will not be blocked; but I think it is a rather strong course to push a Bill of this importance at so late an hour.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): If the Motion before us is agreed to, I understand there will be no objection to deferring the further consideration of the Bill for a fortnight. My hon. Friend (Mr. Howard Vincent), I believe, only wishes to take the Committee stage *pro formâ.*

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Howard Vincent,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* 28th April.

MOTIONS.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

On the Motion of Baron Henry De Worms, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The General Pier and Harbour Act, 1861," relating to Aberdeen, Alum Bay, Greenock, Sandown, and Teignmouth, *ordered* to be brought in by Baron Henry De Worms and Mr. Jackson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 222.]

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY (OFFICERS) BILL.

On the Motion of Colonel King-Harman, Bill to amend the Law relating to the office of Assistant Inspector General, and of County Inspector and District Inspector in the Royal Irish Constabulary, *ordered* to be brought in by Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 223.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 15*th April,* 1887.

MINUTES.]—Private Bill (*by Order*)—*Third Reading*—Belfast Corporation (Lagan Bridge), and *passed.*

Public Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Trusts (Scotland) Act (1867) Amendment * [225].

Second Reading — Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [217] [*Sixth Night*], *debate further adjourned.*

Provisional Order Bills — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Local Government (Highways) * [224].

Second Reading—Local Government * [216].

Third Reading — Metropolitan Police * [206] and *passed.*

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BELFAST CORPORATION (LAGAN BRIDGE) BILL [*Lords*] (*by Order*).

THIRD READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [6th April], "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Question again proposed.

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I do not intend, under the circumstances of the moment, to divide the House against the third reading of this Bill; but I feel called upon, as one of the Representatives of Belfast, to take this opportunity of recording my protest against the continuance, by the Town Council of that town, of the system which they have hitherto prosecuted in regard to various other Local Bills. My complaint is that schemes of this kind are arranged at private meetings of the Town Council, and that the ratepayers, who have to provide the money, are afforded no opportunity of expressing an opinion upon them through the ordinary means of convening a public meeting. I should be surprised to hear that any Corporation in Great Britain would have the impudence to present to Parliament a measure involving a very costly scheme of local legislation, without having, in the first instance, called a meeting of the ratepayers and laid the scheme before them. It is particularly to be regretted that in this case that reasonable course was omitted, because the people of Belfast believe that the construction of this bridge across the River Lagan might have been made the means, at the same time, of purifying the river and carrying out certain sanitary works, which at present are much required in the town of Belfast. As I have said, I do not intend to divide the House against the Bill; but I wish to intimate that, as long as I continue to represent the town of Belfast in this House, and the Corporation continue this unreasonable and indefensible system of pushing forward legislation without previous consultation with the ratepayers, I shall feel it my duty to oppose every scheme they introduce in such a manner.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read the third time, and *passed.*

QUESTIONS.

——o——

DOMINION OF CANADA—POLICE SURVEILLANCE OF MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether there is any truth in the statement that the Dominion Government of Canada have signified their intention of placing Mr. O'Brien under police surveillance, in the event of his visiting Canada for the purpose of calling attention to the evictions on Lord Lansdowne's estates in Ireland?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): I have received no information as to the alleged intention of the Canadian Government to place Mr. O'Brien under police surveillance if he visits Canada.

DR. TANNER: Is there any probability of my getting an answer to this Question? It has remained on the Paper a considerable time.

SIR HENRY HOLLAND did not reply.

DR. TANNER: I will repeat the Question next Monday.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND)—OUTBREAK OF MALIGNANT FEVER IN THE PARISH OF BARRA.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether it is true, as stated in *The Scotsman* of the 30th ultimo, that an epidemic of malignant fever has broken out in Glen, island of Pabbay, parish of Barra, and that in many of the houses several inmates have been struck down; whether it is true, as stated, that Allan M'Intyre having died of fever in a bed occupied by himself and two sick children, the latter were left lying 17 hours beside the corpse, because the only other inmate of the house, a boy recovering from the disease, was too weak to move them; whether it is true, as stated, that in another case specified, a man, his wife, father-in-law, and sister-in-law, were all lying ill, with no one to attend them but a child of five or six years; whether any medical attendance, or means of isolation, has been provided by the Local Sanitary Authority; and, what is the Sanitary Authority in the district?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON) (Bute) (who replied) said: From the inquiry which has been made into this matter, it appears that there have been about 10 cases of fever in the parish of Barra, and in two instances, at least, more than one member of a family has been attacked. The number of houses in which it has broken out is not precisely stated. The information does not bear out the statements in the second paragraph of the Question. The children had a separate bed in the house, for which the Inspector of Poor supplied clothing when the fever began. The statements in the third paragraph of the Question are correct. On the 5th of March, in consequence of a Report from the Procurator Fiscal and police, the Board of Supervision called on the Local Authority to give immediate attention to the matter, and the Board again pressed the matter on their attention on the 10th of March, the 18th of March, and the 25th of March, in consequence of further Reports of new cases. All the cases are being attended to, both medically and otherwise, and means taken to prevent the spread of the disease. The Parochial Board of the parish is the Sanitary Authority.

INSPECTORS OF IRISH FISHERIES—DESTRUCTION OF FISH FRY ON LOUGH NEAGH.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) (for Colonel SAUNDERSON) (Armagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the attention of the Government has been called to the destruction of fish fry on Lough Neagh; and, if so, whether the Government will take steps to prevent the injury to the Lough Neagh fishing continuing?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The attention of the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries has been recently called to the matter, and they communicated with the local conservators, who are responsible for the management of the fisheries of the district, and also with the lessees of the Honourable the Irish Society's fisheries on the Bann. The Government, however, as the hon. Gentleman is aware, has no power to coerce the parties in this matter.

INCOME TAX COLLECTORS—SUPERANNUATION.

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, If Income Tax collectors are entitled to superannuation under the new Regulation which makes their bonds continuous?

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigton) (who replied) said: No.

EXCISE DEPARTMENT (IRELAND)—PROPOSED REDUCTION OF STAFF.

MR. J. E. REDMOND (Wexford, N.) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Whether any schemes for a reduction in the Irish Excise Department have been submitted to the Treasury; and, if so, whether any of them have been sanctioned; whether it is contemplated to reduce the Inland Revenue Excise Staff in Ireland by about 70 officers; and, if so, whether, in the granting of probate and letters of administration, serious inconvenience will be caused to tenant farmers and others who cannot afford to employ a solicitor; whether, in many localities, the nearest Revenue Officer will be 30 or 40 miles distant; and, whether there will be a loss to Ireland, if this change be carried out, of £14,000 a-year in salaries?

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigton) (who replied) said: No such schemes as are here referred to have been submitted to the Treasury. It is in contemplation to reduce the Inland Revenue Excise Staff in Ireland; but not to the extent anticipated by the Question. It is likely that some places will be 30 miles trom the residence of an officer of Inland Revenue; but such places are thinly populated, and very little, if any, inconvenience is apprehended in the case of persons desiring letters of administration or probate. The aggregate of the salaries represented by the reduction of the establishment is considerably less than the amount stated.

POOR LAW (IRELAND)—DAVID BROOKS, MASTER OF THE ARMAGH WORKHOUSE.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Board of Guardians of the Armagh Union, at their meeting on Tuesday, 5th instant, by a majority of one, appointed a person named David Brooks to the position of Master of the Armagh Workhouse; whether he is the same David Brooks against whom a man named Bernard Vallely obtained a decree for damages for the seduction of his daughter, Widow Berry, alias Vallely, at the Armagh Quarter Sessions, Easter, 1886; whether Widow Eliza Berry, alias Vallely, and her illegitimate child, James Brooks, are at present inmates of the Armagh Workhouse, over which David Brooks has been appointed Master; and, whether, under those circumstances, the Local Government Board, of which he is President, will consider the propriety of refusing to sanction the appointment of David Brooks as Master of the Armagh Workhouse?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): The answer to the first paragraph of the Question is, Yes; the answer to the second is also, Yes; the answer to the third paragraph is, No; and with regard to the last paragraph, in reference to the Local Government Board, I have to say the matter is still under my consideration.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—COMMITTAL OF A LUNATIC BY THE NEWRY MAGISTRATES.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If he be aware that William Durnan, a person alleged to be of unsound mind, was committed to gaol for eight months by the Newry magistrates; and, whether he has been examined by the medical officer of the gaol; and, if not, whether he will be examined in order to ascertain his mental condition?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I understand that this man, on committal to prison, was seen in the usual course by the medical officer, and passed by him. He is at present an inmate of the district lunatic asylum.

FUNDS IN CHANCERY—ALLEGED PAYMENT OF £72,000—THE WHADDON HALL ESTATES.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, If his attention has been called to a statement in *The Daily News* of 8th April, that—

> "A working gardener at Luton yesterday received a cheque for £72,000, which he has just recovered from Chancery;"

to a statement which has appeared in various papers within the last 10 days, to the effect that the "Whaddon Hall Estates," valued at £3,000,000, "besides a fund in Chancery derived from accumulated rents and profits," are about to become the subject of a suit in Chancery, between persons claiming to be entitled under the will of a person who died in 1772; and, whether there is any foundation for either statement, so far as the Unclaimed Funds in Chancery are concerned?

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL (A LORD of the TREASURY) (Wigton) (who replied) said, that with regard to the first paragraph of the Question, he was informed that no cheque for £72,000 had been recently issued from the Pay Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature in connection with any fund in Chancery. As to the second part of the Question, the Pay Office had no information as to the pending Chancery suits; but he had been referred by the solicitor to the owner of the Whaddon Hall Estate to a paragraph which was published at his instance in *The Daily Chronicle* of the 13th instant and in the other papers, stating that there was no action pending in relation to the title to the estate, and that no one could possibly sustain a claim to any portion, and expressing the editor's regret at having given currency to the report. He should add, with reference to the third paragraph of the Question, that the largest fund included in the list of unclaimed funds recently published amounted only to between £15,000 and £16,000.

ARMY—ROYAL IRISH RIFLES—REMOVAL FROM NEWTOWNARDS TO DONAGHADEE.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Secretary of State for War, with reference to the proposed alteration in the place of training of the 3rd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles from Newtownards to Donaghadee, Whether the inhabitants of Newtownards have petitioned against the change on the ground that it will cause distress and want among the wives and families of the men; and, on the other hand, that the inhabitants of Donaghadee are likewise opposed to the change, believing that it would very injuriously affect the interests of their town as a watering place; whether the Under Secretary gave it to be understood in March that the training this year would be in Newtownards as usual; and, whether, having regard to the bent of opinion on the subject, and the fact that a period of nearly three months has yet to elapse before the date fixed for the assembly of the regiment, he will rescind the order changing the place of training, and revert to the uniform practice of many years?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have to thank the hon. Member for his courtesy in twice postponing this Question until I obtained the requisite information. The change from Newtownards to Donaghadee was arranged by the military authorities upon grounds of military convenience. I have, however, received strong representations upon the subject; and, having given full consideration to the local wishes which have been expressed, and to the long period of time during which the present practice has prevailed, I am willing to allow the annual training to take place this year at Newtownards as usual. But I must add this warning—that unless some step is taken, without delay, to provide a better camping ground at Newtownards, it will become absolutely necessary to transfer the annual training to another place.

EGYPT—THE CAPITULATIONS.

MR. J. WILLIAMSON (Lancashire, Lancaster) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has any information to show that the Capitulations at all obstructively affect the fiscal and police administration of Egypt; and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency of initiating negotiations for their abolition, as was successfully done by the French at Tunis immediately after their assumption of protectoral authority in the Regency?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The subject of the hon. Member's Question is very large, and cannot be disposed of in a few words. He will find that it has been treated at considerable length in the Reports of Sir H. Drummond Wolff, which are about to be presented to Parliament; and that the means of remedying or mitigating the evils caused to Egypt by the abuse of the Capitulations forms part of the question which Sir H. Drummond Wolff is now discussing with the Porte.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED ASSAULTS ON THREE GIRLS AT CULLEN, NEAR MILLSTREET.

Mr. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Newington, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention had been called to the following statement in *The Times* newspaper of Monday last:—

> "Cork, 10th April. A cowardly outrage was perpetrated at Cullen, near Millstreet, last Sunday evening. Three respectable young girls were walking on the high road when they were waylaid by some of the local village tyrants. The ruffians accused the girls of having spoken to policemen notwithstanding the warning they lately received. They then tore their hats off, which they kicked about the road. Others of the party provided themselves with furze bushes, and, raising the girls' clothes, they beat them most cruelly about the legs;"

whether the facts, as above stated, are correct; and, whether any steps have been taken to punish the offenders?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): This Question necessitated local inquiry, and I have not yet been furnished with the requisite information.

Subsequently,

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) said, he wished to ask the Chief Secretary, Whether, seeing this outrage was alleged to have been committed five days ago in a district in which there was a telegraph station, no reply had yet been received?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; no reply has been received.

Mr. SEXTON: There is no official information yet?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No.

THE COLONIES—ANNUAL REPORTS OF STATE AND PROGRESS.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether he has any objection to requesting the Governors of all Colonies to furnish an Annual Report, for presentation to Parliament, of the state and progress of the countries over which they respectively rule?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): Reports of the kind indicated by the hon. and gallant Member are annually made and presented to Parliament; but, if he will communicate privately with me as to any point in which he considers these Blue Book Reports defective, I shall be happy to consider it.

ADMIRALTY—RESIGNATION OF NAVAL OFFICERS ON HALF-PAY.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether a naval officer on half-pay has the right to resign his commission?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is, and always has been, held by the Admiralty that a naval officer, when on half-pay, has not the right to resign his commission.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THE QUARTERLY RETURN.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, When the Return of Evictions for quarter ending 31st March last will be distributed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I am informed that the Return will be ready in a few days, and as soon as I have it I will lay it on the Table of the House.

CUSTOMS REVENUE—GOODS DUTY FREE TO IRISH WORKHOUSES.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, in view of the poverty of the tenant farmers and other taxpayers in many parts of Ireland, he will recommend that all goods upon which duty is chargeable be in future given free to Irish workhouses?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The suggestion, I am afraid, is quite impracticable.

ADMIRALTY — PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS—LORD BRASSEY'S "NAVAL ANNUAL."

MR. DWYER GRAY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether Lord Brassey's *Naval Annual* contains information drawn from Admiralty private and confidential documents, to which none but officials have access; and, is the gentleman referred to by him as assisting Lord Brassey in the work of editing his *Naval Annual* the present Director of Greenwich Hospital, who is paid £1,000 a-year as a servant of the Government?

THE FIRST LORD (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): The information contained in *The Naval Annual* is of such an extensive character that it is impossible to undertake the detailed investigation necessary to answer the Question. The noble author is the only person who can answer it. Speaking generally, the information is of a character similar to that published in other English and foreign compilations. The present Director of Greenwich Hospital did assist Lord Brassey in the work of editing *The Naval Annual.* But, as I have already informed the House, the assistance given was altogether of a private nature, and given out of office hours, and he had nothing to do with the supply or collection of the matter contained in the book.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—TELEGRAPH STATION AT SHERCOCK, CO. CAVAN.

MR. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he will consider of appointing a telegraph station in the town of Shercock, County Cavan, where there is a weekly market, a monthly fair, a large number of merchants, and the district around thickly populated?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I will cause inquiry to be made, and communicate the result to the hon. Member.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND) — MR. CHARLES BROWNLOW, J.P.—SPEECH AT CROSSGAR, CO. DOWN.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention has been called to the report in *The Belfast Evening Telegraph* of the 12th instant, of a speech purporting to have been delivered by Mr. Charles Brownlow, after having been presented with a trowel at the laying of the foundation stone of an Orange Hall at Barnamaghery, near Crossgar, County Down, and in which Mr. Brownlow is reported to have said that he feared—

> "The time was rapidly approaching when the Irish Question would be transferred from the House of Commons to arbitrament in the field,"

and that they (the Orangemen) should have their forces properly constituted; whether Mr. Brownlow is a magistrate; and whether it is the intention of the Government to take any steps regarding the use of such language?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): My attention has not been called to the report, except by the Question of the hon. Member, which is on the Paper without Notice; and I am not aware whether it is accurate or not; but I would point out that any complaint of the conduct on the part of a magistrate should be addressed to the Lord Chancellor.

INSPECTORS OF IRISH FISHERIES—REPORT ON HOWTH HARBOUR.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Irish Fishery Inspectors have sent in a Report of the investigation held by them last October into the condition of the Harbour of Howth; if so, whether he will lay a Copy of the Report and of the Evidence on which it is founded before the House; and, whether he proposes to take any action in reference thereto?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I have called for information in this case; but, the Question being down without Notice, I have been unable to obtain the necessary reply.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—CITY AND COUNTY OF CORK—APPOINTMENT OF DR. LOVE.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in view of the recent additions to the magistracy in the County and City of Cork, the report is correct that Dr. Love, of Cork, has been appointed one of the magistrates for the City and County of Cork?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): I have called for information in this case; but, the Question being down without Notice, I have been unable to obtain the necessary reply.

THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION—REDUCED RENTS—ANTE-DATING.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Assistant Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Do the Government intend to bring in legislation to enable tenants whose rents have been reduced by the Land Commissioners to ante-date the amount of the reduction so that it may operate from the commencement of their tenancies, or to recover it by way of set-off against arrears, or to make it an available asset in bankruptcy against the landlords' claim to rent; and, is it the fact that the total judicial reduction in the gross rental of Ireland amounts nearly to £1,000,000 per annum?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour) (Manchester, E.): Perhaps the hon. and learned Gentleman will allow me to answer it. [Mr. T. M. Healy: No, no!] The Government have no intention of bringing in any legislation of the kind suggested, which would, in their opinion, be inequitable in principle and unworkable in practice. Full details regarding judicial rents are already before the House in printed form. I think, however, that the hon. and learned Member will, on referring to them, find that he has over-estimated the total amount of the reduction.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked if it was not the business of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet to answer such a Question?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is the usual practice, when any question of policy is addressed to the Government, that it should be answered either by the Head of the Department or by the Leader of the House.

SEA AND COAST FISHERIES (IRELAND)—ILLEGAL DRIFT-NET FISHING IN CORK HARBOUR.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether he will direct the Coastguards stationed in Cork Harbour to assist in preventing the illegal drift-net fishing which has of late been practised on the tidal waters of the Lee?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The Coastguards stationed in Cork Harbour have orders to watch and report to the Conservators any illegal drift-net fishing which may come under their notice. The Admiralty have repeatedly refused to employ the Coastguards or cruisers to prevent the alleged illegal drift-net fishing in the tidal waters of the Lee, as any protection that may be required should be provided by the Civil authorities, the duty of the Navy being limited, so far as fishing rights are concerned, to keeping order between foreign and British fishing boats frequenting the sea-fishing grounds.

GRANTS TO THE ROYAL FAMILY—THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If he can now state when the Government proposes to appoint the Select Committee on Grants to Members of the Royal Family?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the Government to invite the House to appoint a Committee on the subject after Whitsuntide.

THE EXECUTIVE (IRELAND)—PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY TO THE LORD LIEUTENANT—APPOINTMENT OF COLONEL KING-HARMAN.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, By what authority the Office of Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland has been constituted; whether any document will be laid before Parliament describing the nature and duties of the Office, and the conditions under which it is held; and, whether it is contended that the Government has the power to create unpaid Parliamentary Offices without limit?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Mr. Speaker, the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant has been appointed by virtue of the authority which exists in the Executive Government of the day to appoint Assistant Secretaries in order to carry out in an efficient manner the duties cast upon any Department of the State, subject, in certain cases, to statutory control, respecting the vacating of seats, the right to sit in Parliament, and the payment of salaries, if any. No document will be laid before Parliament describing the nature and duties of the Office, or the conditions under which it is held; but it is right to state distinctly that no salary or profit is attached to the Office. The last Question being one of abstract law, the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly able to form his own conclusion upon it.

MR. JOHN MORLEY: Well, Sir; but is the House, then, to have no means of knowing what are the functions, duties, and conditions of the appointment?

MR. W. H. SMITH: The right hon. Gentleman is well acquainted with the duties of Public Offices which have to be discharged by the Executive Government. He is also aware what are the duties which ordinarily fall to Under Secretaries in a Public Office.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, whether his attention or the attention of the Law Officers of the Crown has been called to Statute 41 *Geo.* III., which prohibits the sitting in this House of the holder of any Office created in Ireland either by, or subject to, the approbation of the Lord Lieutenant, since 33 *Geo.* III.?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to answer that Question. The attention both of the Government and of the Law Officers of the Crown has not been called to this Statute, but they were perfectly aware of its existence. The provisions of that Statute have not, I think, been accurately studied by the right hon. Gentleman. [*Cries of* "Read!"] I am perfectly willing to read them either now or at any time that the right hon. Gentleman wishes. ["Read, read!"] Now, I will state to the House what my view of that Statute is. It expressly recognizes the possibility of appointments being made by the Lord Lieutenant, but only vacates seats or renders gentlemen ineligible to sit in this House if they hold offices of profit under the Lord Lieutenant. I may say this is not the first occasion on which this matter has been considered by Law Officers of the Crown. I believe the current opinion for a great many years has been exactly in accordance with the view at present taken by Her Majesty's Government.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to know whether the Private Secretary appointed by the new Under Secretary will be paid from the public purse; and, if so, out of what fund?

MR. W. H. SMITH: No decision has been taken upon that question, Sir. If the Private Secretary is paid out of any public funds, the House of Commons will have full control over the matter.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman give a pledge, in the meantime, that the Private Secretary, or the Under Secretary, will not be paid out of the Secret Service Fund?

MR. W. H. SMITH: It is not the habit of the Government to use the Secret Service Fund for such a purpose.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid.): Is the present appointment intended to supply the missing link in the Orange Cabal which at present misgoverns Ireland?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: Is the Attorney General aware that when the present right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was appointed High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands without any salary being attached, it was held that the necessity for re-election applied to an office, and not simply to a place of profit, nnd that the right hon. Gentleman, on being appointed High Commissioner, was compelled to vacate his seat?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have the greatest pleasure in answering the Question to the best of my ability.

The right hon. Gentleman is not correct in thinking that there is any difference between "office" and "place of profit." It has been determined on many occasions that these words are connected together, the meaning being "office of profit" and "place of profit." I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that if at any time he will study the matter with me, I will take him through all the precedents. It will be a work of great pleasure to do that in his company. With regard to the somewhat interesting case of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, I was rather in hopes that he would put the Question to me, because it might interest the House. It is perfectly true that the right hon. Gentleman was appointed Lord High Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, and that he was re-elected for the University of Oxford on that occasion. As to whether or not he need have been, is a somewhat doubtful question; but the necessity for such re-election was certainly not on the ground that he had held, or had been given, a place of profit—or office—or anything which would lay down any rule within which the appointment we are now discussing would fall; but it was upon the ground that the Statute of Anne prohibits "any Governor or Deputy Governor of any of the Plantations" from holding a seat in Parliament. If the right hon. Gentleman had taken the opportunity of studying, as I have been obliged to do, *May's Parliamentary Practice*, he would have found that the instance of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian was not singular. There have been previous cases in which Lord High Commissioners of the Ionian Islands had also vacated their seats, on the ground that they came, or were supposed to come, within the express words of the Statute of Anne relating to Colonial Governors, and certainly not on the ground that they held either "office" or "place of profit" under the Crown.

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE — CONTRIBUTION FROM PARLIAMENTARY FUNDS.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is the intention of the Government, as stated in *The Standard* of Thursday, to propose that a contribution to the Imperial Institute should be paid out of monies provided by Parliament; and, if so, what sum will be required for the purpose?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): There is no foundation for the report that the Government will propose that a contribution should be paid to the Imperial Institute out of monies provided by this House. The whole story is an absurd *canard*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[BILL 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SIXTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): Sir, the Crimes Act of 1882, for the conduct of which I was responsible in this House, has been so repeatedly referred to in these debates that I perhaps need make no apology, even after the length to which this debate has been extended, for asking leave to say something on this subject, and its connection with the proposals now before the House. In speaking of the Act of 1882, I think I ought to make my acknowledgments to the Home Secretary (Mr. Matthews) for the compliment he was pleased to make me regarding that measure, and what he called its brilliant success. There was one element of success, however, which was wanting to it. I did not feel sure until a very recent period that that measure recommended itself to the Home

Secretary, or to the Gentlemen who sit around him. I should like to know whether those encomiums on the Act of 1882 formed part of the Election Address of the Home Secretary in November, 1885, when, in concert with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), he was contesting Birmingham? I think the view taken at that time of coercion and of the Crimes Act was somewhat different from that which we have heard recently stated by those two distinguished persons. The Act of 1882 expired, we all know, in the autumn of 1885, and a good deal has happened since then. There is one remarkable feature in the subject of coercion which is deserving, I think, of the attention of the House, because it has a very important bearing on the future policy regarding Ireland. Since that period both the great Parties in the State have declared against the employment of Coercion Bills for the government of Ireland. What was the course that was taken by the Party opposite on that occasion? It was known that that Bill was about to expire. It was known that the Government of that day intended to propose the re-enactment of some of the clauses of that Bill—clauses which were not at all of the stringent character of those now proposed in the Government Bill. There was a change of venue; there was not a change of venue to bring the prisoners to England. There was a summary jurisdiction, confined, if I remember rightly, exclusively to intimidation, which was not at all of the character of these clauses embodying the Whiteboy Acts in this Bill. It was a Bill, as Gentlemen opposite knew very well, which was not to be proposed in perpetuity, but which was to be proposed for a single year only. Now, that was the character of the measure which it was known the Government of that time intended to introduce. What was the condition of Ireland at that time? Was it very different from what it is now? The National League then existed as it does now. Boycotting was in full force; and I do not know any reason to say that Boycotting is more extensive now than in 1885. From all my knowledge I shall say that is not the case. That being the condition of Ireland at that time—it being known perfectly well that it had been announced that the Government were about to propose clauses of that character—I hear it said this is the first occasion on which the responsible Opposition have opposed a responsible Government when proposing a Coercion Bill for Ireland. What was the course of the Gentlemen now sitting on the Bench opposite, who were the responsible Opposition of that day? They did not even wait for the proposals of the Government. A very important statement on this subject was made in September, I think, of that year by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. He said that weeks before the fall of the Liberal Government the Leaders of the Tory Party had met together, and they had come to a resolution on this subject of coercion. I possess a copy of the noble Lord's collected works, and a curious circumstance occurred the other day in reference to those works. I observed that the noble Lord, at Paddington, claimed a character for statesmanlike prescience and political foresight, and referred to a speech that he had delivered in Edinburgh in the year 1883. Well, I desired to refresh my recollection of that speech, and to refer to the eloquent and vigorous passages in it, and I looked into the collected works of the noble Lord, but I found that the whole passage relating to Ireland had been expunged. But then the *editio princeps* of the noble Lord's works was published just about the time of the Election of 1885, and it was not convenient at that time that this prophetic denunciation should present itself to the minds of hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. Well, the Leaders of the Tory Party met together, according to the noble Lord, and he says that some weeks before the late Government fell it was obvious to any ordinary political observer that the late Government were likely to fall, and the consequences of the fall of the late Government were a subject of the most serious consideration to Lord Salisbury and his immediate political friends. He then goes on to describe how they took a decision on the subject of coercion at that time. He says that that decision was taken long before the late Government came to grief.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will read the exact words. I think he will find that the decision which I described as having been come to by Lord Salisbury and his Friends was qualified by the amount of information that was then at their command.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: What an extraordinary thing it was that Leaders of a great Party, without the official information, should meet together and come to a decision for the purpose of overthrowing a Government which had the official information! Well, the noble Lord said that was a decision taken long before the late Government came to grief. What was the foundation of that decision?—

> "Never," said he, "was there a decision on a grave question of policy more deliberately and anxiously considered; and further, I believe, never was there one that was more guided by the light of Constitutional practice, because we, as Englishmen, must remember, for the sake of our own liberties and for the sake of the liberties of our sons and those who come after us, that the Constitution of England absolutely prohibits the imposition of exceptional restraints on liberty except in times of great disorder."

I am coming to inquire whether there is any greater social disorder now than there was in 1885. Well, fortified by this decision of the Tory Opposition, the noble Lord went about the country denouncing the intention of the Government to pass those clauses which we are now told are quite a matter of course—clauses that might perfectly well be applied to England, and be made perpetual here or anywhere else. That is what we are told now. What was said then? The noble Lord denounced the Government for a great many things, but, among others, principally for this. He said—

> "The Government intends to apply to Parliament for a renewal of the Acts which are called the Coercion Acts."

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: From what speech is the right hon. Gentleman quoting?

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: The speech is one either about the decline of Britain or the Tory programme, or something of that sort. It was delivered at Bow in June, 1885, when the noble Lord knew that these clauses—these innocent clauses now, but those wicked clauses then—were about to be renewed. He said—

> "The Government intends to apply to Parliament for a renewal of the Acts which are called the Coercion Acts. I do not think that for the purpose of the consideration of this topic it is of much moment whether the demand made by the Government is for great or for smaller powers. It is sufficient to remember that to the Irish people these powers, whether large or small, come under the name of coercive, exceptional, and peculiar legislation."

Let the House mark this. The noble Lord says—

> "The published Returns presented to Parliament show no abnormal amount of crime."

It is said there is an increase of crime now, but the rise in the barometer of crime compared with what it was in the previous year was much greater in 1885 as compared with 1884 than it was in 1886 as compared with 1885. The reason, I believe, is the cause with which we are all familiar now—namely, that crime decreased in 1883 from the assessment of fair rents, but increased in 1885 because, owing to a fall in prices, the rents had again become excessive. The noble Lord said—

> "The published Returns presented to Parliament show no abnormal amount of crime. . . . Irish politics are always turbulent, and Irish affairs will always be attended with difficulty and anxiety. Her Majesty's Government must have terrible facts and terrible evidence to adduce in support of their demands."

Then again, in his speech at Bow on the 3rd of June, 1885, one of the great indictments which the noble Lord brought against the Government of the day was this—

> "The Government are about to renew the Crimes Act and the Coercion Act for one year, and they are going to buy for the tenants of Ireland, with the money of the British taxpayers, the remaining rights of the people of Ireland."

Well, Sir, the noble Lord and his Friend succeeded. They got the support of the Irish Nationalist Party by these declarations that they would resist a Coercion Bill if it were introduced by the responsible Government of the day——

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I never said anything of the kind.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: And that if in power they would not themselves introduce coercion. That is not all. There is another important incident to be noted. They came into Office; they had declared against coercion in Ireland. We are told sometimes that we are great criminals on account of communications with the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Friends. [Colonel Saunderson: Hear, hear!] I assure the hon. and gallant Member that I am not going to impute anything of the kind to him. I have seen a great deal of rubbish in *The Times* as to the duty of politically Boycotting the hon. Member for Cork and his friends on account of their supposed association with crime. Well, was that the view taken by the Government that was then ardently supported by the hon. and gallant Member who cheered just now? What, Sir, was the first act of the Tory Lord Lieutenant of Ireland? I will do him the justice of describing it in his own words. He said—

> "The political position was, to say the least, a very peculiar one."

That is true. Nobody will venture to deny that—

> "Lord Salisbury had just formed a Government. I had just gone to Ireland, and I had before me as difficult a task as could well have fallen upon the shoulders of any man. At that moment there was no one who could precisely say what the wishes and the desires of the Irish Parliamentary Party were. There was only one man who was in any way qualified to speak. He was the chosen Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and his power was singularly and exceptionally large. It was notorious that when the new Parliament should be elected his strength would be at least doubled."

These were the reasons which induced Lord Carnarvon to seek an interview with the hon. Member for Cork. He has not told us, nor has the hon. Member for Cork told us, what passed on that occasion; but I will undertake to say of that interview that it took place with the knowledge and approval of the Prime Minister. How could it be otherwise? I do not ask what passed at that interview, or what was the result of it; but at all events *post hoc*, if not *propter hoc*, the Government of Lord Salisbury had the whole support of the Irish Parliamentary Party at the Election. I say, then, that first of all there is this remarkable fact—that within the last 18 months both of the great Parties in the State have disavowed the application of coercion as a method for the government of Ireland. I do not know whether the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) who sits near the hon. and gallant Member opposite who cheered when I said it was attributed to us as a crime that we have communicated with the hon. Member for Cork agrees in that, but we did not hear the noble Lord cheer that. Does the noble Lord say that in reference to the government of Ireland he thinks it wrong that the Leader of the great majority of the Representatives of Ireland should be consulted in regard to the measures and the policy to be pursued towards Ireland? Has he himself never done anything of the kind? I venture to say that he has; let him deny it if he can. There is another distinguished friend of mine who is very great now on the subject of the Chicago Convention. I refer to my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain). Will he denounce on the foundation of "Parnellism and Crime," all communications with the hon. Member for Cork on Irish affairs? Will he get up in this House or in Edinburgh and say that he never held consultations—that he never took sweet counsel together—with the hon. Member for Cork with reference to the government of Ireland? And, therefore, I say that this rubbish may be dispensed with on such high authorities. Do you really believe that it is possible to govern absolutely and entirely without reference to the opinions and wishes of the persons who are here to represent Ireland? If that is your view I do not comprehend what your theory of the Union is. I thought your theory of the Union was that the Irish Members were here for the purpose of expressing the views of the Irish people, and that those wishes and views ought to be taken into account and ought not to be treated as something absolutely to be set aside. Now, that is the course of the Conservative Party with reference to the far milder proposals which it was understood were to be made by the Liberal Government in 1885; and you have it announced — deliberately announced — that it is your design to turn round and charge us with insincerity. And the Party who won the Election of 1885 by their close friendship with the Nationalist Party have the effrontery to accuse us of inconsistency! Our proposals, as contemplated at that time, were totally different from those you now make. If you want any witnesses to that assertion of mine I will refer you to the letter of Sir George Trevelyan. He was a Member of that Government. He knew what was proposed, and he has given you his opinion as to the difference in the character of the proposals. Well, as to the case which you make out now as contrasted with the year 1885. I wish to speak with all respect for the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) in the arduous task which is imposed upon him, but I cannot say that I thought that the case presented for this Bill was a strong one, and every day since these discussions commenced it has been apparent that the case has grown weaker and weaker. He gave us a few examples which reminded me of the celebrated remark of Mr. Disraeli about "coffee-house babble," but that was all torn to shreds by the hon. Member for Cork. The right hon. Gentleman gave a few examples of crime, but as it turned out these examples broke down altogether. In one of the cases on which he relied has sowing that trial by jury broke down the Judge directed an acquittal. Is that one of your examples? I never heard any reply given to that. It is admitted that there is no material increase of crime. That is conceded. There is no doubt about it. The right hon. Gentleman is in fact obliged to say that he does not rest his case on any material increase of crime. I think the Returns give us 700 agrarian crimes in 1884. They rose to 900 in 1885, when the Party opposite said there was no need for coercion, and since that time they have risen 100 more, to 1,000. You, of course, do not rest your case on figures like these. Then the right hon. Gentleman falls back on this curious theory; he says it is the smallness of crime that proves his case. He reminds me of the lines—

> "My wound is great because it is so small.
> Then it were greater if 'twere none at all."

If that be so, when crime absolutely ceases to exist in Ireland you will contend that the case for coercion is stronger than ever. We were told that when we got the Returns of crime then the case for coercion would be conclusive, but in default of any evidence you can produce you bring forward the opinion of the Judges. If the opinion of the Judges had been upon anything that had taken place before them—if it dealt with cases which were brought before them—then that would be evidence. But that is not the case with regard to the Judges. As to the facts of which they spoke they knew nothing at all. Here is what one of the Judges said—one of the very Gentlemen quoted by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Justice Johnson. He said—

> "I have no other means of information whatever than that based on the Returns presented to me. I have no personal knowledge of these matters, except in these returns. There they are; it is no business of mine to explore the cases in these reports."

That is the sort of knowledge possessed by the Judges. Mr. Justice O'Brien says—

> "I defer any observations I shall make to you in order that I may have an opportunity of examining certain Returns contained in these materials which would enable me to form a judgment upon the state of things existing in this county."

He had no knowledge except these returns. Why have we not had these returns, so that we might form our own opinion upon them? Then Mr. Justice O'Brien goes on to refer to an increase in the offence of intoxication. I do not know whether the National League is responsible for that, but the learned Judge says that it is—that is, the intoxication—the cause of the continued demoralization of the country.

> "A great many conclusions," we are told, "are founded on that circumstance, and to that cause is to be ascribed the spread of lawlessness and resistance to the fulfilment of legal obligations."

Therefore the lawlessness is due to intoxication. I wish to speak with the greatest respect of the Judges acting in their judicial capacities, and performing their high duties, but as to relying on them for an opinion on the political or social condition of the country or the remedies applicable I entirely decline to do anything of the kind. I do not believe that a worse authority could possibly be appealed to. What is the history of the Criminal Law of this country? It has been reformed in spite of the Judges. There has been no mitigation of the cruelty of the Criminal Law which has not been resisted by the unanimous voice of the Judges. [*A laugh.*] I state that distinctly, in spite of the laugh from the Under Secretary for India, and I recommend him to read the unanimous representation of the Judges presented by Lord Ellenborough against the Bill of Sir Samuel Romilly, afterwards carried by Sir Robert Peel, where they said that no property would be safe in this country if you remove the capital punishment for stealing from a shop to the amount of 5*s.* Now, that is notorious to anybody who knows the history of the Criminal Law. Reform has not been made at the instance of the Judges. They naturally from their occupations think that it is only by the utmost severity of the law that society can be preserved. Happily, that is not the view of Parliament. Parliament is not to be influenced by judgments of that character. It is said by Gentlemen opposite that the jury system has broken down. What proof have they given of that? You have heard two or three examples alleged by the Chief Secretary for Ireland where it is said they have broken down. But the Home Secretary had the courage at last to refer to one trial in Ireland which had been carefully avoided by the Chief Secretary. I mean the trial of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon). No doubt that trial broke down; but it was a political trial. But have trials of a political character never broken down in England? Well, it is very happy for this country that they did break down more often than they succeeded, and that verdict after verdict was given in the direct teeth of the direction of the Judges. Why, who does not recollect Hone's case? Lord Ellenborough thought the failure was due to a weak Judge, and he said, "I will go down," and he went down and failed. He went down a second time, and the jury returned a verdict against the direction of the Judge. Is it to be said, because there has been a failure a few times, that, therefore, trial by jury is to be abandoned? What would have been thought in England if the Government proposed to suspend trial by jury on that ground? The truth is that one main foundation of the liberties of England has been the stout refusal of the juries to find verdicts of the pressure of the Judges in political cases. Then, is it contended that the jury is bound to take the direction of the Judge and give a verdict in accordance with that direction in a criminal trial? What man who knows anything of the law would undertake to make such an assertion as that? and yet I hear it over and over again as proof that trial by jury has broken down in Ireland because the Judge summed up for a conviction and the jury acquitted. What was the whole history of Erskine's struggle with Lord Mansfield and the Judges but the right of the jury to find a verdict, not only upon the facts, but upon the criminal character of those facts? In all the cases you have established the right of the jury to find not only the facts, but also the felonious character of the facts; and this principle does not only apply to the Law of Libel, but it is of the essence of the general issue of "Not Guilty" in criminal cases. Endeavours have been made to punish juries for not finding according to the directions of Judges upon questions of law. In Bushel's case, more than a century ago, Chief Justice Vaughan, speaking of the complaint "that the jury did acquit against the direction of the Court in a matter of law," said—

> "If the meaning of the words be that—if the Judge, having heard the evidence given in Court (for he knows no other), tells the jury on this evidence that the law is for the plaintiff or the defendant, and they, under pain of fine and imprisonment, are to find accordingly—everyone sees that the jury is but a troublesome delay, great charge, and of no use in determining right and wrong, which seems a strange and new-found conclusion after a trial so celebrated for many hundreds of years."

Yet we hear men getting up and saying that trial by jury has failed because there has been an instance in which a jury has found a verdict against the direction of a Judge. To talk of taking away the right of trial by jury on such a ground seems to me to be intolerable. I say you have made no case whatever upon anything you have laid before us for the annihilation of trial by jury in Ireland. It seems to be almost a waste of time to argue the proposed change of venue to England. I do not know whether we shall ever reach the discussion of the proposal in Committee. I see signs that the gorge of even Liberal Unionism is rising against it, and I will wait until it becomes a practical question. I think you will not carry it; but I will venture to prophesy, even against the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, that if you do carry it you will never dare to put it into operation. There is another part of the Bill which I think is still more important. In the Act of 1882 there is a clause referring to Boycotting, but it is under the heading of intimidation. If the Government had proposed remedial measures, and, with reference to Boycotting, had introduced a clause addressed to intimidation, and intimidation alone, I, for one, would not have opposed such a proposal. But the clause in the Bill is a totally different thing. In the Summary Jurisdiction Clause the 2nd sub-section applies to intimidation; but the 1st sub-section has no application to intimidation at all. The Chief Secretary for Ireland challenged anyone to show that anything in the Bill would facilitate the exaction of exorbitant rents. I tell him that it is in this sub-section of the clause. The tenant in Ireland is weak and defenceless by himself, and if the landlord can only secure that he shall deal with the tenant alone, then he has him at his mercy. The only protection against the abominable transactions by which the landlords have oppressed their tenants in Ireland, and of which we have evidence in the latest Blue Book, is that the tenants shall have the right of combination which belongs to the working men of England, and which has placed them in a position of independence and of comparative comfort by their resistance of the oppression resorted to in England by employers of labour. I say that by that clause of the Bill, and still more by the Whiteboy Clauses, it is intended to make it impossible for any men in Ireland to enter into these combinations, which they ought to have a right to enter into, apart from intimidation. This is a most important matter, and, in my opinion, it is the very pith and marrow of this Bill. The question of the Law of Conspiracy is one which is not so familiar to Members of this House, as it was when the right hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) and I debated it in this House, and when we laboured to overthrow the Judge-made law which rendered combinations of working men illegal. That was the Judge-made law which you profess to appreciate so highly, and the House of Commons destroyed it as regards trade disputes. I will put this as a case that may occur under the Bill. Three or four men desire to agree not to take a particular farm at the excessive rent which, as they think, is asked for it; it may be that £2 an acre is asked, and they say, "We will not give more than 30s.;" and every one of these men may, under this Bill, be sent to prison. The words used are "criminal conspiracy;" but as "gross negligence" is negligence with a vituperative epithet, so "criminal" before "conspiracy" is only bad drafting. "Conspiracy" means "criminal combination," and if it is not "criminal" it is nothing at all. What is it that Judges have held to be conspiracy? It does not involve intimidation, because intimidation is dealt with in another part of the Bill. As is well known, under the Law of Conspiracy, apart from the Trade Union Act, an act perfectly lawful in a single individual may become a criminal proceeding if it be done by two or three individuals. I remember arguing the case once in this House, and Mr. Disraeli, with the admirable humour which distinguished him, said, "a conspiracy to count out the House, for instance"—not a bad illustration of a charge of conspiracy. In his admirable history of the Criminal Law Mr. Justice Stephen, after referring to some of the decided cases, makes this observation—

> "If this is the Law of Conspiracy, then it is an indictable conspiracy for two brothers having a sister who is going to marry an undesirable man to say to her—'If you make that marriage then we will cease to associate with you.'"

This gives an idea of what is or may be conspiracy. Yet this is the jurisdiction you are going to give, not to Judges of wisdom, weight, and skill, but to half-pay captains. They, forsooth, are to decide what is criminal conspiracy under the words "or not to let, hire, use, or occupy any land." I will put this case. Suppose some tyrannical landlord has committed some very brutal act of eviction, and the tenants upon the estate agree together and say, "We will not take that farm." There is no breach of legal obligation, because there is no legal obligation; there is no refusal to pay rent, because it is not due; but it is a criminal conspiracy under the clause to induce a person "not to let, hire, use, or occupy any land." Ministers shake their heads; but I do not rely upon my own judgment alone. I wrote a few days ago to a gentleman who will be admitted to be probably the highest authority on the Law of Conspiracy, the man who did more than anyone else to carry the change of law I have referred to. I asked him whether I was right, and he said that my view was absolutely correct. This is the real meaning of the Bill, and of the inclusion of the Whiteboy Acts using the still more dangerous term, "illegal combination." And, mark, the Bill is not confined only to the letting of land. The words that follow are "or not to deal with, work for, or hire any person." You say that that does not touch the principle of trade unionism. Of course, it would not affect persons within the protection of the Trade Union Act; this is avoided by the saving clause of the Bill; but the provision attacks the whole principle, and it strikes at every man who is not absolutely within the protection of the Trade Union Act. This part of the Bill is absolutely new; it is not to be found in any Coercion Bill ever introduced before. It is not to be found in any Act since the abominable Acts passed with respect to trade combinations a century ago. In order to give spice to their Bill the Government seem to have raked up all the worst precedents that can be found in former times, and they have got this out of the Statute of Labourers. They have got the change of venue out of Lord North's Act against the State of Massachusetts, and, as if that were not enough, they have shovelled in wholesale the infamous Whiteboy Acts, of which Lord Chesterfield when Lord Lieutenant said that if the military had only put them in force against the landlords instead of against the Whiteboys they would have done a great deal more good. I say, then, that the object of this Bill is apparent in this clause. It is to prevent legitimate combinations by the tenants of Ireland in order to protect themselves against oppressive landlords. The Chancellor of the Exchequer really let the cat out of the bag, because he said that what they wanted this Bill for was to enable them to get on with their land legislation. What does it mean then? Why, it means that the Bill is intended to enable the Government to carry out the policy which they seem to have adopted of maintaining judicial rents at their present height, in spite of their own Royal Commission having declared that those rents are higher than they ought to be, and the object is to bring in a Purchase Bill founded upon those rents. That, Sir, is the keystone of the whole policy. The Bill is to be preliminary to a Purchase Bill, and to keep up the rents in order that the purchase money may be higher than it would otherwise be. That has been avowed. A witness before the Commission—I think he was an agent of Lord Clancarty or Lord Gosford, I am not sure which — was asked whether the judicial rents were too high. He said they were. He was then asked why they are not lowered, and he replied—"Because there is a Purchase Bill coming." That, then, is the secret of this Bill. You may say that even if these are bad laws they will be administered with moderation. Sir, that is a very old apology for a bad law. But by whom are these laws to be administered? Sir George Trevelyan knows something of Ireland, and he knows something of what is the meaning of this Bill, and of what its real effect will be in Ireland. He says in the letter he has just written—

> "The full weight of this terrible but one-sided measure is intended to fall and will fall upon the politicians of one Party alone, and every Liberal who votes for it will be as neglectful of the well-established Liberal doctrine that you can suppress crime, but that you cannot suppress opinion, as he will be untrue to those traditions of impartial justice in obedience to which his old historical Party has always, however fitfully and imperfectly, attempted to govern Ireland."

Then Sir George Trevelyan goes on to refer to the men by whom this Bill is to be administered. Sir, the Government have given to Ireland and also to England an indication of the spirit in which it is going to be administered by their most recent appointment in Ireland. The old Orange landlord flag has been hoisted on the Castle. It is under that flag that this law is to be carried out. Sir George Trevelyan refers to this point in his letter, and speaking of the Attorney General for Ireland he says—

> "This gentleman and the recently-nominated Under Secretary for Ireland, Colonel King-Harman, took a prominent part in the defence of these unwarrantable proceedings, by which it was attempted, at any risk to the public peace and to human life, to defeat the resolution of seeing fair play all round, which Her Majesty's representative had adopted. I have no ill-will, and much the opposite, towards Colonel King-Harman, but I cannot refrain from saying in the most emphatic terms which I can command that he and the Attorney General for Ireland are not the proper men to be counsellors of the Lord Lieutenant, and to have themselves an amount of power over the liberties of their countrymen which far exceeds anything that can be imagined or believed by those who have not been behind the scenes of Irish administration. It is a Government so advised and so manned to which Liberals are asked to commit this new and cruel weapon, which, in such hands, cannot be a sword of justice, and at the absolute and uncontrolled disposal of which they are invited to place every politician, Press

writer, and Press worker in Ireland. . . . The real defect of this measure is that it is a Coercion Bill directed against the written and spoken expression of opinion, and which will be worked by administrators who have proved beyond all question that they are actuated by the strongest Orange sympathies."

That, Sir, is the opinion of a man who knows Ireland well, and who has been responsible for the government of Ireland. This is the Government's mission of peace to Ireland! By this appointment you have declared yourselves, in respect to this Bill, the partizans of a section of the people of Ireland. You are going to administer the Bill as the agents of the Irish landlords. By this appointment—you have told it to all the world—you are going to become the instruments of the worst passions of religious prejudices and class privileges in Ireland. You could not have selected a man in all Ireland by whose appointment you could have made more clear to everybody what are the intention and the spirit of the Bill. You dismissed Sir Robert Hamilton. The landlords of Ireland would not stand Sir Robert Hamilton. You are going to get rid of Sir Redvers Buller, whom the landlords of Ireland have not forgiven; and you have appointed in his place a landlord, a Member of this House, who is not even an Irish Member, for he sits for the Thanet Division of Kent, as Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland. Sir Redvers Buller was sent to Ireland, as Lord Salisbury describes it, as a "fresh eye." He is an officer and a gentleman, and in his evidence he expressed his disgust at what he saw there, and at the manner in which the Irish tenants were oppressed. You are tired of the "fresh eye." He has not seen what you intended him to see. You are going back to the old eye with your new Under Secretary—the old eye with which, for so many generations past, the English Government has alone consented to look at Irish affairs. I shall be asked, perhaps, whether I contend that the existing state of Ireland is satisfactory. I say nothing of the kind. You referred to the Act of 1882, and the Home Secretary said that that Act succeeded in putting down crime in Ireland. In concert with the operation of the Land Bill, and with the removal of excessive rents, it did, to a great extent, succeed in putting down crime, and I am glad that it did so succeed. But in one respect it did not succeed. After crime was put down, it had not put an end to disaffection in Ireland; it had not put an end to the quarrel between the English and Irish peoples; it had not reconciled the Irish people to their government by England; when the Bill expired the chasm was as broad as it had ever been before. You say that the National League is supreme in Ireland, that it is obeyed rather than the law of the land. Why is the National League supreme? It has no army, no police. ["Yes!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Where, then, does it get its army and police from? [An hon. MEMBER: America.] I shall have something to say on the subject of America. Sir Redvers Buller has told you why the National League is powerful in Ireland. It is because the Irish believe that it protects, and has protected, them from unjust landlords, and therefore they trust it. The English Government is not powerful in Ireland because the people do not believe—and your recent appointment will not have the effect of making them believe — that it intends to protect them; but that, on the contrary, it does the very opposite. The Irish Government is weak and the National League is strong because the League is trusted by the Irish nation and the British Government is not trusted. Do you think that this Bill will make the English Government more liked by the Irish people and that it will make that Government stronger? Do you think it will make the League less trusted by the people? You say you are prepared with remedial measures. What are they? How are they prepared? You have proceeded upon the extraordinary principle of refusing to take into account the opinion and the judgment of the Leaders of the Irish nation. You have introduced a Land Bill for Ireland in the House of Lords. Is that a Bill which is suitable for Ireland? Is it a Bill which commends itself to any class of people in Ireland? As far as I have seen, the Bill has been condemned by both the landlords and the tenants of Ireland. It seems to have been drawn up in absolute ignorance of the wishes and wants of the Irish nation. What is it that you propose by the Bill? Are you going to revise the rents as the Royal Commission has recommended you to do? Not at all. You are going to keep up the rents and make the tenant insolvent. But what the Irish people want is to have reasonable rent and be solvent. You are going to set Ireland straight by a Coercion Bill and a National Bankruptcy Bill; that is the remedial policy of the Government. Now, I have some sympathy with the Chief Secretary for Ireland. I do not attribute to him this extraordinary and ridiculous Bankruptcy Bill. The fact is it is one of those political bargains which sometimes have to be made. There are equivalents to be given on both sides. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) is to vote for coercion, and the Government have taken his Bankruptcy Bill. A very bad bargain it is for both—for the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, who has to swallow coercion much to his own great damage, and for the Government, who have taken his Bankruptcy Bill, which has landed them in a ridiculous mess. That is your remedial measure, and so you will go on to the end of the chapter, as long as you choose to take your Irish legislation from Birmingham entirely regardless of the opinions and wishes of the Irish people, and will not consult the Irish Representatives because you say they look to America. A great deal has been said about American gold. The people who ought to be the last in the world to say anything about American gold are the Irish landlords. It is by American gold and from American gold that they have got the greater portion of their exorbitant rents. They have screwed and wrung those exorbitant rents out of their unfortunate tenants, who have been able to satisfy their excessive demands only by labour elsewhere or by the charity of their relations who had been driven from the shores of Ireland to America. The new Under Secretary, I should say, has as much American gold in his pocket as any Irish Land Leaguer. So much for American gold. But you say the Irish look to America. That is not a new statement, and on that subject I should like to refer to the view taken by a man of great authority upon Irish affairs—at least he was once—the senior Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright). That right hon. Gentleman went to Dublin at a very critical period in 1866 in the midst of the Fenian insurrection, and there was a great deal of communication with America at that time. He said at the beginning of his speech that the Habeas Corpus Act was then suspended in Ireland, and that he only spoke by leave of the Government. With regard to Irishmen looking to America he used very eloquent and remarkable words. He stated that he had had a letter from an Irishman, and he went on to say—

> "He told me that he believed a very large portion of what he called the poor among Irishmen sympathized with any scheme that was adverse to the Imperial Government. But the people here are rather in the country than of it, and that they are looking more to America than they are looking to England. When we consider how many Irishmen have found refuge in America, I do not know how we can wonder at that statement. You will recollect that when the ancient Hebrew prophet prayed in his captivity he prayed with the window opened towards Jerusalem. You know that the followers of Mahomet, when they pray, turn their faces towards Mecca. When the Irish peasant asks for food and blessing his eye follows the setting sun; the aspirations of his heart reach beyond the wide Atlantic, and in spirit he grasps hands with the great Republic of the West. I say that the disease is not only serious, but it is even desperate."

Now this is so important a matter, and it has been so often referred to, that I will quote another authority, a great writer, about a people looking to a foreign land. Lord Macaulay says—

> "The feeling of patriotism when society is in a healthful state springs up by a natural and inevitable association in the minds of citizens who know that they owe all their comforts and pleasures to the bond which unites them in one community. But under a powerful and oppressive Government these associations cannot acquire that strength which they have in a better state of things. Men are compelled to seek from their Party that protection which they ought to receive from their country. Nothing is so offensive to a man who knows anything of history or human nature as to hear those who exercise the powers of government accuse any sect of foreign attachments. If there be any proposition universally true in politics it is this—that foreign attachments are the fruit of domestic misrule. It has always been the trick of bigots to make their subjects miserable at home, and then to complain that they look for relief abroad; to divide society, and then to wonder that it is not united; to govern as if a section of the State were the whole, and to censure the other sections of the State for their want of patriotic spirit."

What can more truly describe the cause of the differences of feeling in Ulster and the rest of Ireland than those words? Why does the difference exist? Because England has always governed Ireland for Ulster and the landlords and against the rest of Ireland. Lord Macaulay goes on to say—

> "There is no feeling which more certainly develops itself in the minds of men living under tolerably good government than the feeling of patriotism. Since the beginning of the world there never was any nation, not cruelly oppressed, which was wholly destitute of that feeling. To make it, therefore, ground of accusation against a class of men that they are not patriotic is the most vulgar of legerdemain sophistry. It is the logic which the wolf employs against the lamb. It is to accuse the mouth of the stream of poisoning the source."

The whole philosophy and the whole history of the Irish looking to America is to be found in the passages I have quoted; and if you want to cure them of looking to America give them reason to look at home, make them look to the British Government—which they have never done—as their friends and their allies. I am sorry to have detained the House so long, but there are yet a few points which I wish to touch upon. With reference to your remedial measures, how do you start them? You start your Land Purchase Bill, and you say—"This Bill is to be the means of getting rid of the demand for national self-government for Ireland." By that very assertion you give the Irish people a distaste for your Land Purchase Bill. It is to be an obstacle to another thing which they desire and cherish; and, therefore, you destroy the chances of your Land Purchase Bill in the eyes of the Irish people by the very argument by which you seek to recommend it. There is one feature in the Bill before the House which distinguishes it from every other Bill of the same character ever proposed to the British Parliament. There never has been, I am confident, until now, a Coercion Bill of any kind proposed to Parliament which did not fix a limit to its operation. Even in the bad times of Castlereagh and Sidmouth the Six Acts had their limit. There never before was a Government which dared to propose a perpetual Coercion Bill. We have been told that it is not perpetual, because it can be repealed. Why do you not give the House of Commons an opportunity of saying whether it is right and proper that at some future time this Coercion Bill should be renewed? Just conceive the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act being made perpetual. Do you think the House of Lords would consent to repeal it? I say that the object of this Bill is to place it in the power of a House of Landlords to make it and keep it perpetual; and that is a feature of no other Coercion Bill. I charge against this Coercion Bill that it is a breach of the fundamental conditions of the Union, which you pretend to reverence. What is the fundamental principle of the Union? It is that England and Ireland should live under the same equal laws and privileges. You may say that circumstances arise at certain times which compel you to suspend the operation of the regular law for a limited period. But if you say, "We suspend the privileges of Irish citizens for ever," then you violate the fundamental principle of the Union. I venture to say that by fixing this as a perpetual law without any limit of time, you strike a heavier blow at the Union than has yet been struck. What might the Government have done instead? They might have introduced a Land Bill more in accordance with the wishes of the Irish people. They might have introduced a measure of self-government for Ireland—not our measure, because they disapprove of that; but I do not know that they intend to carry on the government of Ireland just as it is for ever. Why did they not introduce their plan of self-government? Then they would have come to the Irish people, at all events, with proposals which would have been deserving of consideration and of friendly consultation; and, as my right hon. Friend has said, there is no man on this side who would not have been delighted to assist in the discussion of some proposal which, though it did not go the length of our Bill, might have had some chance of settling the question. If you had done that you would have disarmed the National League; you would have removed to a great extent both its agrarian and its political object; and if coercion had been necessary you would have been in a very different position in coming forward to propose it. It seems to me that that would have been a conciliatory and statesmanlike policy. I cannot conceive why you did not do so. The only reason I can find is that which I have already given—that you were determined above and before all things to keep up Irish rents in view of the intended Purchase Bill. This is a policy of pure force. You are going to carry it out for the most unjust objects and in the most obnoxious manner. In my opinion this Bill will not remove, but will aggravate the evil in Ireland. The great evil in Ireland is that British rule is hated and distrusted there. This Bill will make it more hated and more distrusted. You will have against you in working this Bill forces which no English Government has ever had to contend with in administering a Coercion Act—you will have against you the opinion of the majority of the people of Scotland. ["No, no!"] Well, wait till we see the Division List. You will have almost the unanimous voice of the people of Wales against you, and you will have a great and growing voice among the people of England—it will be under these influences that you will have to administer this coercion. I observed what I thought a remarkable example of taste and judgment in the speech of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington which he delivered last night at Birmingham. He said that this policy of coercion would be a suitable monument for the year of Jubilee. I should have thought that this was a topic which every man would have desired to pass over in silence. If there is anything to be regretted it is that after the 50 years of her Majesty's auspicious reign the condition of Ireland is no better than when Her Majesty ascended the throne. Of no other part of this United Empire can that be said, and it is because I believe that this Bill in its tendency will not diminish but will aggravate the evil—that it will poison still more the relations between England and Ireland—that I shall cordially vote against its second reading.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): In making some reply to the remarkable speech which has just been delivered by the right hon. Gentleman, I will not refer to him as he referred to my hon. and learned Friend on my left (Sir John Gorst), by saying that he was once Solicitor General for England, but I do not know what he is now.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: I assure the right hon. Gentleman that I meant nothing derogatory by that remark. I simply did not know what Office the hon. and learned Gentleman at present holds. If what I said was offensive in the slightest degree, I at once withdraw it.

MR. PLUNKET: Then, of course, I also withdraw my remark. However, I may say that, even for the moment, I had not forgotten what the right hon. Gentleman had been politically engaged in during the last few years. His speech, as far as I could assign any meaning to it, appeared to me to have as its principal object the vindication of himself, by anticipation from charges which he expected would be made against him on the ground of political inconsistency, and also from what he called communication with the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and his Party. Well, the right hon. Gentleman might have saved himself the trouble; for I should never dream, have never dreamt, of occupying the valuable time of the House in preferring such an idle accusation as that. The right hon. Gentleman then went on to denounce what he styled "the rubbish in *The Times*." I have read the articles in *The Times*—"Parnellism and Crime" —which I presume he referred to. They struck me as being of a serious and weighty character—[*Cries of* "No!"]— unless they can be disproved. Neither have I any intention of making such charges against hon. Members from Ireland who sit below the Gangway opposite. Their conduct is their own affair, and so is their responsibility; and I would only say that it would be worth their while to contradict those articles if they can. But since the right hon. Gentleman denounces as rubbish the charges against the hon. Member for Cork and his Party, of having been connected with Fenianism and other secret associations, I should like to call his attention to certain language which he himself once used on this subject— not for the purpose of showing his inconsistency, but for the purpose of throwing some light upon "the rubbish in *The Times*." On the 11th of March, 1881, he said—

> "Am I right or wrong in saying that this Land League organization is really Fenian, and Fenian in its character? I say exactly what I believe about the matter. It is perfectly true, as the hon. Member stated, that the Fenian organization endeavoured in former times to attack the English Government by open force; but, having found that that force could not be successful, it is my firm conviction that exactly the same object has been, and is being, prosecuted by other and more indirect methods."

And later on, in the same speech, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "When we see men seeking the support of arms to assist their purposes, and find members of the Land League in communication with Communism in Paris and Fenianism in America, then I say the maxim applies—*Noscitur ex sociis.*"—(3 *Hansard*, [259] 842-3.)

The right hon. Gentleman devoted some portion of his speech to a consideration of the reliability of the evidence afforded as to the condition of Ireland by the charges of the Judges—the very same Judges upon whom he himself relied when bringing forward the Crimes Bill a few years ago. And then the right hon. Gentleman proceeded to a minute examination of Clause 2, Subsection 1, and argued that it constituted an attack on associations which corresponded with trades unions—that if three men agreed not to take land, that would be a criminal conspiracy within the meaning of the section, and that it was aimed at the legitimate combination of the tenants of Ireland. I most emphatically deny that. The right hon. Gentleman founded himself upon a letter he received from some person whom he described as of high authority. But we do not know who this person is; therefore, we cannot be expected to admit his "high authority." If we were told what was the case presented to him, and what was his exact answer, his authority would also have more weight with us. But I am not going to endeavour to enter upon this minute matter now.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Hear, hear!

Mr. PLUNKET: The right hon. Gentleman ironically cheers; but I do not think he was in the House when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby made the observations to which I refer.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I was; and heard every word of my right hon. Friend.

Mr. PLUNKET: At any rate, I do not think that this is a matter for debate on the second reading. As the right hon. Gentleman, however, has quoted high authority, I will tell the right hon. Gentleman that the words "any criminal conspiracy" to which he referred were inserted for the express purpose of guarding against the very construction which he alleges the section bears; and I can state on the authority of my right hon. and hon. and learned Friends the Attorney General and Solicitor General for England, as well as on that of the Irish Law Officers, that the section does not bear the interpretation that the right hon. Gentleman has placed upon it. In Committee they will be prepared to establish that view. I am sure that nothing can be further from the intention of the promoters of the Bill than that the section should bear the interpretation put upon it; and, in Committee, there can be no objection to using words which may be unsusceptible of the interpretation put forward by the right hon. Gentleman. But I deny that the present words do bear that interpretation. It is, no doubt, very convenient to represent to public opinion that this Bill is aimed at such combinations as correspond to trade unions in England; but the other night the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey), who does not sit on this side of the House, eloquently pointed out the distinction between trade unions and combinations in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman also said that it was the intention of the Government to administer this Bill in the interests of the Irish landlords—that the Government was getting rid of General Buller and appointing the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) to his place, and that all was to be left to the latter and my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland. There is no ground whatever for imputing to my right hon. and learned Friend any sort of undue sympathy with landlordism. It is very easy for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby to make that charge, and for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to cheer it; but——

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: The only charge I made was contained in Sir George Trevelyan's letter which I read.

Mr. PLUNKET: I am glad to be able to inform the right hon. Gentleman that, so far as that gallant gentleman is concerned, we have every hope and confidence that the Irish Government will not be obliged to lose the services of Sir Redvers Buller. It is by him, and by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who is responsible to this House, that the Act will be administered. The right hon. Member for Derby criticized the Government very severely on the point that, in dealing with the Land Question, they have not followed exactly the recommendations of the Royal Commission appointed by themselves. They have, however, done so to a very great extent; and I will ask, did the right hon. Gentleman, having obtained their Report, deem it necessary to follow every recommendation of the Crofters Commission? No; he threw overboard a great many of their recommendations. The right hon. Gentleman then said—"You should have introduced your Land Bill first." As he has said that, I should like, upon that point, to recall to his mind the following extract from the Report of Lord Cowper's Commission, upon which he relies so greatly:—

> "But, while recommending certain changes in the law, which circumstances have rendered necessary for the present relief of the tenants, it is right that we should also press in the interests of all classes the maintenance of law and order, which has in several parts of the country been grievously outraged. In the absence of that security which ought to be enjoyed in every civilized community, capital is discouraged, enterprize and industry are checked, and it is impossible that any country can thrive or any healing measures be devised which will add much to its prosperity."

Besides that, we have already received an intimation of the spirit in which the hon. Member for Cork will receive our remedial legislation. Before I proceed further, I should like to say that it is no pleasure to me, standing here as an Irishman, to take any part in the enactment of any measure which is to apply to Ireland, and which can possibly be characterized as coercive, however slight and mild in its nature it may be; but when I heard the right hon. Gentleman vehemently attacking this "Tory Coercion" Bill, as he called it, I could not help recalling the fact that during the 17 years since I first had the honour of a seat in this House I have taken part in six or seven Bills of a more or less coercive character. One of them was introduced by the Tory Government at the time when I was Solicitor General for Ireland, and I have always looked back with pleasure to the fact that we were then enabled to substitute, for a very severe measure which we found upon the Statute Book, one of the mildest that has ever been passed. All the other Bills in which I have taken part have been proposed, not by a Tory Government, but by Liberal Governments, and they culminated in the most severe measure of them all, that of 1882, which was, I may say, personally conducted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby himself. Now, I have felt all through this debate that, in the line followed in opposition to this Bill by right hon. Members and hon. Members opposite, there has been a certain amount—I will not say of insincerity, but certainly of inconsistency. What is the situation? The present Government have been placed in power for the express purpose of maintaining the integrity of this Imperial Parliament, and to administer the Queen's Government, and they have been placed in power by an overwhelming majority of the electors of all the Three Kingdoms. [*Cries of* "No!" *from the Opposition and Home Rule Benches.*] The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, I know, draws a distinction between different Nationalities; but, for myself, I am quite unable to understand why the view of Scotland, or Wales, or Ireland, should count for more in the matter than the view of England. To the Government also has been confided the trust of maintaining the administration of the law in Ireland. Well, the Government come to Parliament and frankly declare that, to the best of their ability, they have endeavoured hitherto to carry on the government of Ireland and to administer the Criminal Law without any exceptional powers. But they say that they have failed to do so owing to the fact that there is in Ireland a combination, calling itself a Constitutional combination—it is Constitutional on one side, but it is criminal on the other; and they say that this combination is supported throughout the country by a veritable network of conspiracies in its branches, which take upon themselves to interfere with the everyday acts of everyday social life, and which have, in a great part of the country, usurped the authority and functions of the Government. Knowing this, the Government have come to the House, and asked for such alterations in the system of administering the Criminal Law as will enable them to cope with these conspiracies, and to fulfil the trusts imposed upon them by the nation. Now, what is the answer that has come from the Opposition—at all events, from that portion of it which is led by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian? The defence is twofold; it advances on two separate lines, which are not only inconsistent, but mutually destructive. There is, first, a feeble attempt to show that the grounds on which it is maintained that there has been a breakdown of law and order are not sufficiently strong to justify exceptional legislation, and that the measures proposed go beyond what the case entitles the Government to ask for. It is not denied that, to a great extent, there has been a breakdown of the Criminal Law in Ireland. It is admitted that, in many parts of the country, intimidation is rampant. But what is the use of arguing with them on these questions when they have a second line of defence? Supposing the Government were able to establish, to the utmost extent, both the breakdown of law and order, and the necessity of the provisions which we ask for in this Bill, then we are met by the answer—"All the more reason for adopting the true remedy, which is Home Rule, and not the amendment of the Criminal Law." These two lines of argument are, in my judgment, wholly inconsistent and mutually destructive. I believe the Government have fully satisfied the public opinion of the country that this Bill is necessary, and that its provisions we are asking for will be found adequate for the purpose of restoring law and order in Ireland, and for enabling those remedial measures to work which the Government are pledged to bring in and press forward as soon as the present Bill is disposed of. But the attitude of hon. Members opposite being such as I have shown, it is a waste of time to argue with them, and to attempt to satisfy them that this Bill is needed in consequence of the breakdown of law and order. What is the use of forcing that argument home, when hon. Members opposite tell you that, no matter what you may prove, they must, in any case, bow to the will of the 85 Members from Ireland who sit below the Gangway? The right hon. Member for Derby strove to show that we had not established our case as to the breakdown of the jury system in Ireland. The truth is that, whenever there is any degree of political or agrarian excitement in Ireland, it is difficult to work the jury system, and when that excitement increases to a great extent it becomes impossible to work it. This is from the Report of Lord Lansdowne's Committee in 1881—

> "In cases where the disturbing element enters, though the criminal may have been detected having upon his person traces which would leave no doubt as to his guilt, though his identity may have been clearly established, the jury have again and again disagreed, and found a verdict of acquittal."

Among the recommendations, which were numerous, were these—(1) Proposals to facilitate changes of venue, and for obtaining special juries; (2) summary jurisdiction in cases of rioting, aggravated assaults, forcible possession, assaults on process servers and agents of the law, threatening letters, and intimidation. There is one other authority which I should like to cite to the House. It is the authority of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and I quote from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in introducing his Home Rule Bill, and when he was speaking in opposition to coercion. I do not, therefore, quote it at all as supporting a Coercion Bill, but in support of our contention as to the nature and operation of jury trial in Ireland. This is what the right hon. Gentleman says—

> "With certain exceptions for the case of winter juries, it is impossible to depend in Ireland upon the finding of a jury in a case of agrarian crime according to the facts as they are viewed by the Government, by the Judges, and by the public, I think, at large. This is a most serious mischief, passing down deep into the very groundwork of civil society."—(3 *Hansard*, [304] 1046.)

Well, Sir; but what we say is that the very case has arisen when this weakness of the jury system in Ireland has been developed to its fullest extent. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby said that the whole case of the Government had been disposed of by the hon. Member for Cork; but he said nothing at all about the statement of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General for Ireland, that at the last Munster Assizes, in three counties, the Assizes had to be adjourned on the very ground, which was assented to by the Judge, that it was impossible to get verdicts from the juries. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian objected to the permanent character of the Bill, and said it was the object of the Government to deprive the House of Commons of the power of criticizing the continued operation of the Bill in Ireland. Now, I should like to know what is to prevent the House of Commons, if it thinks fit, from challenging the Government of the day at any time upon that very point? But the right hon. Gentleman says—"Ah! the Lords;" and, displaying a tremendous antagonism to the House of Lords, says that they will fasten the fetters upon Ireland for all time, and that there might be a Government in power who wished to repeal the Act, and the Lords would not let them. Surely the right hon. Gentleman must be driven to the most amazing shifts when he puts forward such a proposition in support of his argument. But I wish to put this to the House, if the right hon. Gentleman urges that seriously as a case that can occur. Suppose there were a Government in power with every desire to repeal this Act, and the House of Lords kept the Government in a condition of suspended animation with reference to its sanction to the repeal of the Act, I must remind the right hon. Gentleman that every clause of the Bill, from beginning to end, is governed by this—that the acts done must be done in districts which have been proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant, and the moment a Viceroy sent over by the right hon. Gentleman, if he were in power, sets his foot on the soil of Ireland, he would have nothing to do but to cancel the Proclamations which his Predecessor had made, and then the operation of the Act would collapse and fall like a house of cards. I have not the smallest expectation that this explanation will prevent the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends, when they are stumping the country, from denouncing this measure in pathetic language as coercion for ever and ever; but I challenge them to deny the accuracy of the statement which I have made. In denouncing this measure as one of coercion for ever and ever, the right hon. Gentleman forgets that if he had a House of Commons, and a Government in power which were checked by this infamous House of Lords, that it would be in the power of the Lord Lieutenant, by a single stroke of his pen, to put an end to the operation of the Act. Our case is that the present state of things is one that cannot be tolerated by a Government responsible for peace and order in Ireland. Is that true or not? It is just now the cue of Irish Members to minimize the breakdown of law and order, and to show that the Government is in possession of sufficient authority in Ireland. What did they say a short time ago? I shall content myself on the present occasion with one or two quotations, not from magistrates, or police inspectors, or landlords, or Judges, or any other class who are denounced by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and by some right hon. Gentlemen opposite. The quotations I shall make are from Representatives of Irish constituencies sitting opposite, who wish now to minimize, as much as possible, the breakdown of law and order. I will not now refer to the well-known language used by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), when he was in Ireland; but I wish to point out that the words which I am about to quote were spoken when they could not be contradicted, when the force and weight of them could not be impugned, and when, consequently, they had an enormous effect in spreading the demoralization which exists among certain classes in Ireland. These are the words of the hon. Member for North Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond), who, after saying that the Government had been confronted and beaten by the Irish people, went on to say—

> "Their decrees are literally danced upon by the Irish people; their Proclamations from Dublin Castle are treated as waste paper."

Then Mr. William O'Brien, at Roscommon, at a meeting in February last, held in relation to the Bagot estate, said—

> "We have nailed our colours to the mast in this business, and our flag to-day—the flag of the Campaign—floats bravely over all the land."

And he added—

> "It is our enemies who are beaten and broken; from shore to shore of this island the law of the League is the law of the land."

I beg leave, however, to say that this is a considerable exaggeration; but, to a great extent, in parts of the country it is unfortunately true. I ask the House and the country—Is it possible, then, for any Government, intrusted by the country and by an overwhelming majority of the Representatives of the United Kingdom, to admit the truth of that statement, and not to ask the House for assistance to prevent this anarchy from proceeding still further until the authority of the Government in Ireland is completely overthrown? Sir, I am astonished at the extraordinary zeal and energy with which the agitation against the provisions of this Bill has been set on foot; and as I trace, as I think, throughout the skill, the ability, and the fire of the old electioneering Parliamentary hand, I cannot help thinking—Oh! if they only had their own Bill of 1882 to denounce instead of ours—if they only had the Curfew Clauses, and the visitings at night, the breaking into the homes of the tenantry, the intrusions into the secret recesses of newspaper offices, and the confiscation of these valuable newspapers; and, above all, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, which is the foundation of our liberty—if only they had those to denounce, how they would have made the welkin ring. Yet it is not so very long since these very measures were passed, and vigorously administered under the Government of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. There is another point to which I should like to call attention. It is said that this is a political Bill—that it is an insult to the 5,000,000 of the Irish people. I deny that; I say this Bill is not a Coercion Bill. It is aimed at crime, and I deny that any man who obeys the law in Ireland will ever have reason to know that the Bill, which is so denounced, is law at all. Those who will have reason to know that it has passed into law are the petty tyrants who work the conspiracy by which this so-called agitation is kept up. And others also will have reason to know, and those are the men who are oppressed under the existing system of tyranny in many parts of the country. Those only are the persons who will have reason to know of the existence of this Act. If there is one thing brought out more than another in the Report of Lord Cowper's Commission, it is the desire of people who are suffering from it to be delivered from the Boycotting system in various parts of the country, and the conspiracies which are at work to enforce it. I will take one witness whose evidence struck me as being very forcible. The Rev. John O'Leary, parish priest of Ballymacelligot, near Tralee, said, in answer to a question—

> "And I know a man who had purchased and who went into the purchase matter greatly against the prospect of his own success—a man who was an idle man and given to drinking, spending a good deal of his time in town, knocking about, and who did not do much to improve his farm. That man became a purchaser, and is working like a nigger ever since."

Further on, in reply to Lord Cowper, who asked—

> "You think if you were enabled to purchase to any large extent it would make them desirous to uphold law and order for their own sakes?"

Father O'Leary said—

> "Ah! my Lord, the people are anxious for law and order; the people are anxious for it. They are tired of agitation."

After relating a painful case of Boycotting in answer to Mr. Neligan, who inquired—

> "What is the feeling of the people at the committal of a horrible, cowardly outrage like that (the case of Boycotting)?"

Father O'Leary said—

> "It is condemned universally."

Mr. Neligan asked—

> "Do you think that they would hand over the perpetrator of such an outrage to the authorities?"

Father O'Leary replied—

> "That is quite another thing. They condemn these outrages and disapprove of them; but they are afraid to give any sort of evidence, or any sort of indication whatsoever, that might lead to the detection of crime, because they are afraid that the criminals so detected would retaliate upon themselves."

Mr. Neligan asked—

> "You think it is more terrorism than sympathy?"

Father O'Leary said, in reply—

> "I do not believe that there is a particle of sympathy among the older members of the family. I do not think there is a particle of sympathy existing, and I know, furthermore, from being pretty well acquainted with the young men of the parish—I know there is a vast number of young men in my parish who have no sympathy, and never had, with crime."

Speaking for myself, that is just what I should expect as far as my own knowledge goes. It was my lot formerly, in earlier and pleasanter times, to travel much through these counties where the disorder exists with which we are now unhappily obliged to deal with by this Bill, when I went the Munster Circuit as a barrister. At that time I was well acquainted with the people at that time. They were then an orderly and, as I am sure they are still, a generous and warm-hearted people, who obeyed the law and were faithful to their contracts. That was, however, before this baneful conspiracy was set on foot and before this terrorism was exercised over them. What we ask of the House of Commons is to assist us in doing that which is necessary, we ask this Imperial Parliament to give us such powers as will enable us to break down so much of this agitation as is really criminal in its character. We do not ask the House to give us power to deal with Constitutional or purely political agitation, but to give us power by this Bill to deal with these criminal combinations, to put down crime and lawlessness, and to enable those parts of the country which are now unhappily in such a disordered state to return to peace and tranquillity, to the happiness and freedom of former times.

Mr. E. R. RUSSELL (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Plunket) has made some reference to the Crimes Bill of 1882. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman quite appreciates the extent to which hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House are indifferent to the credit of that Bill. We are very glad that it is done with. We are well satisfied that the Leaders who are concerned to defend it can establish some distinction between that Bill and the Bill now before the House; but our whole Party, including in it our new Irish allies—of whom we are not ashamed—hope to count on the entire avoidance of coercion for the future. I deprecate what I think is a real waste of the time of the House in recurring to these questions of individual or Party consistency. I desire, however, to refer to one point of the kind, because the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) has repeated in this debate a statement that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in Edinburgh appealed to the country to place him in a majority, because he wished to be left free to disregard the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the 85 Members coming from Ireland. There is no possible misrepresentation which can be more extreme than that. It is often my duty, in the exercise of my profession, to form prompt conclusions as to the meaning of important public declarations; and I distinctly remember, having been myself a convinced Home Ruler before the time, that I welcomed the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman, because I interpreted it to mean that he wished for such a majority as might enable him to extend justice to Ireland, and give effect to the wishes of the people of Ireland, without being exposed to the suspicion of doing so under the compulsion of the Irish Members. I think it rather significant that the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has accepted the proposition that the Bill is to be perpetual unless the Liberal Party come into Office.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket) (Dublin University): The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me. I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. E. R. RUSSELL: I am glad to accept the withdrawal of the statement; but the inference I have drawn from his language—no doubt incorrectly—is that the right hon. Gentleman looks forward with philosophic calm to the perpetual retention of this measure on the Statute Book. Now I desire to say that it is not sufficient that the Liberal Party may have an opportunity of getting rid of the measure when their Friends come into Office. A Tory Opposition may give a great deal of trouble to a Liberal Administration in reference to what they may want to do, to say nothing of the resisting power of the House of Lords. It is not to the advantage of the country that the Tory Party should always be in the possession of coercion laws without the responsibility of coming to Parliament to propose them. I, for one, object altogether to have the liberties of any part of the Three Kingdoms dependent upon the fortunes of any Party. The best protection for the liberties of a people is the laws of the country, and we wish the administration of the laws of the country to be free from the influence of any political section of the country. One of the most gratifying parts of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is that in which he declines to follow the analysis to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has subjected the 2nd clause. My feeling, when I heard that statement, was that, as the hon. Member for Cork had demolished the facts for this Bill, so the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has riddled the law of the Bill. I am also rejoiced to hear that Sir Redvers Buller, like the Bill, is to be perpetual in Ireland, for I willingly acknowledge that Sir Redvers Buller has agreeably disappointed the apprehensions which were entertained on the Opposition side of the House at his appointment. The right hon. Gentleman remarked that the arguments against the Bill are mutually destructive—namely, that there is no case; and, secondly, that if there is a case, we allege that Home Rule is the remedy. I do not see that these two statements are mutually destructive. The dilemma of coercion is this—that if it is applied only to crime, properly so-called, the very necessity of doing so condemns your existing system of government; if, on the other hand, the coercion is directed against political offences, we must condemn the people to a paralysis of their social liberty—we condemn them permanently to institutions under which it is impossible for them to arrive at a better condition of things, and under which everything that at present is blameable and bad among them must be aggravated. Hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House, with the greatest cheerfulness, assert that by this Bill we are only aiming at crime. I want to know what they mean by crime? Was it a criminal charge which was brought lately against the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon); or was that a criminal charge on which the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington) was actually sent to prison and a plank bed? And, if so—whether we agree with the hon. Member for East Mayo or not in the plan of operations which he adopted—we hold that such are fair cases for submission to a jury, and that they ought not to be left to the decision of Resident Magistrates. I heartily congratulate Sir George Trevelyan upon the letter which he has written upon the subject of this Bill; and I will read to the House an extract from the letter, in which the right hon. Gentleman points out the distinction which Earl Spencer was careful to maintain, in carrying out the Crimes Act of 1882, between politics and crime. Sir George Trevelyan says—

> "I have the greatest possible objections to the proposals of the Government to enact penal clauses which could be used for the suppression of the National League and the Nationalist Press. The Government to which I belonged between 1882 and 1885 openly declared and advocated their determination to dispense with such clauses, and the policy which I helped to administer in Ireland, and advocated in Parliament, was to draw a clear distinction between politics and crime, which, in my opinion, this Bill does not do."

Sir, it appears to me that, while the fault of Mr. Forster's rule was that it mixed up criminals and politicians, the fault of this Bill is that it maks no distinction between crime and social combinations. This distinction, which the present Bill ignores, will be still more conspicuously ignored by the kind of men who will be intrusted with the duty of administering it. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) has spoken of the requirement that one of the two persons appointed to administer the Act in each district must be learned in the law, and has said that the lawyer would prove sharper than his lay colleague, and that he would probably make the inquiry more searching than it would otherwise be. Are we, then, to believe that this provision has been introduced to aggravate the severity of the Bill? Manifestly not, and I believe that the people of Ireland would rather be dealt with by trained lawyers than by anyone who exercises simply a police sway. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) said that the right of trial by jury was not to be absolutely withdrawn; but what will it matter to those brought under the law that persons guilty of other offences, or that the people in other districts, are not placed under the summary jurisdiction of Resident Magistrates, but are still allowed the right of trial by jury? I say that if we get rid of the jury system in any part of Ireland we lose that touch with the community which it has been the advantage of the jury system always to secure. We may, perhaps, succeed too much. If the decisions the magistrates arrive at are just, the mind of the people will, nevertheless, be poisoned against justice by the character of the tribunal;

and if they are unjust, grave social wrongs will be inflicted upon the people. The fact is, that the verdicts of juries have always been valuable indications for statesmen who have derived sound estimates of the social condition and opinion of the country from these verdicts. If we trifle with this matter, moreover, we shall encourage both the governed and the governing to interfere more and more with that liberty of private action which it ought to be the aim of all lovers of liberty to secure. Sir, liberty is more intimately bound up than many people believe with adherence to and dependence upon the ordinary law. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General for Scotland asked what liberty is withdrawn by this Bill from the Irish people—"liberty to do what?" Sir, liberty is not altogether a question of what a man may do. It is often equally material how he is to be brought to book if he does something which he thinks himself entitled to do, but which the authorities declare they are entitled to prevent him from doing. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary said that it is not political offences, but criminal offences, that will be dealt with by this Bill. Whose word have we for that? The right hon. Gentleman takes a very easy view of these things now. He pronounces that the Bill will deal with nothing savouring of sedition, treason, or any political offence. He would hardly have said that if he had been in the practice of his old profession and not his new one; but he is now quite cool and easy in reference to any sort of repressive law. He has got Becky Sharpe's £5,000 a-year, and he feels it very easy to be good. It has always been held that it is less heinous to conduct a social agitation than to conduct a political and seditious agitation. The effect of the Bill, if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary's interpretation is right, will be just to reverse this belief in the popular mind. The people will naturally infer that it is less criminal to resort to seditious combinations than to those which have hitherto been considered of a less serious character. I now pass for a moment to the vague and dangerous provision which will expose persons engaged in agitation to the penalties of the Law of Conspiracy, from which, in similar circumstances in this country, industrial agitators are exempted. I think the House and country have been laid under a great debt of obligation to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby for his admirable exposition of the Law of Conspiracy. It is the fashion now to speak fulsomely of trades unions, and nothing excites hon. Gentlemen opposite more than to suggest that there is any analogy between the powers under this Bill and those from which trades unions used to suffer. But some of us are too old to accept this view. The trades unions have only been relieved of the injustice of the conspiracy theories of the Judges by statute. We remember how long and how hard the struggle was, and how entirely it was then the belief of the Tory Party and of many Liberals that the demands of the trades unions were incompatible with the good of society and with the maintenance of law and order. The labours of such men as Frederick Harrison and Henry Compton, aided in this House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), and others, wrought a salutary change, and the wise endeavours of Mr. Justice Stephen have since tended to discredit and prepare for the abandonment of that view of the Law of Conspiracy which enables the Bench to condemn and punish at pleasure almost any action in life that can be objected to by anybody. I protest, Sir, against the retrograde effect which the present measure must have, coming at this stage of a most important transition in the settlement of the doctrine of conspiracy, which all reasonable men hoped would result in practically getting rid of this Judge-made opprobrium of our law. The Home Secretary confesses the "insuperable difficulties" of this conspiracy question, but says they will "not be aggravated" by the Bill. They had not need be; but it will be a strange affair if they are not aggravated by the sudden incursion of these Resident Magistrates. The operations of a mischievous monkey in a photographer's studio will afford a fair resemblance to the havoc likely to be made on legal and Constitutional principles if the 2nd clause of this Bill is carried out. I cannot accept the easy theories of the comparative valuelessness of the jury privilege which have been advanced in the debate. The right to be tried by one's peers, so far from being a mere expedient for carrying out justice, and "not a Constitutional right," comes down to us with much more historical significance. It has been the main instrument of our liberties. It has liberalized jurisprudence; it has corrected the Bench, and the whole system of judicature has derived its best inspiration from it. Looking back upon the past with an historical conscience, we can see plainly enough that it was often less a question whether jurors were finding men guilty or innocent according to the then law, than whether they were by their action asserting and establishing as citizens rights which the progress of the community required to be vindicated. I cannot pass from the Bill without speaking of the perils into which my own profession will undoubtedly be plunged by it. There are hon. Gentlemen opposite who think the Irish Press quite as "pestilent, mischievous, tyrannical, and heinous" as the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary thinks Boycotting. The hon. Member for Brixton (Mr. Baggallay) said yesterday that no paper would be in danger, under this Bill, which was properly conducted. Well, Sir, a properly conducted paper is one that does not come under this Bill, and a paper that does not come under this Bill is properly conducted. That does not help us much. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary is not likely to share these loose views, and I do not accuse him of personal inhumanity; but he regards it as a matter of small moment that hard labour shall be imposed for Press offences under the 2nd clause of the Bill, and says that, even in England, hard labour is imposed on anyone who attacks a police constable in the execution of his duty. Now, we are, unfortunately, left in no doubt that it is the intention of the Government to use this clause against the Press. The Chief Secretary said—

> "We do not propose to interfere with the liberty of the Press. We entertain the hope that by giving magistrates the power of summary jurisdiction for inciting to these offences we may be able to prevent the Press from being sharers in these crimes."

Considering how general the wording of the clause is, and that the sole judges of Press conduct will be Resident Magistrates, I am entitled to say that in the circumstances which, under this Bill, will attend journalism in Ireland, it will be almost impossible for the functions of a journalist to be exercised without very serious additions being made to the difficulties of the profession; and when we consider how much this country owes to the influence of the Press, I contend that I am entitled to claim that its members shall be left free from the operation of summary jurisdiction, which, as yet, has never been applied to them, and which is a most unfit method of correcting any excesses into which the Press may be betrayed. A writer of an article in a newspaper discussing the propriety of any combination or any occurrence in a district to enable the people of the district to secure their rights is not assaulting a constable—he is not even assaulting, in theory or principle, the institutions of the country. He is performing a duty which is thrust daily and nightly upon every journalist, a responsibility which is sometimes too great for the conscientious man to bear, and which becomes additionally onerous and poignant when the journalist exercises his functions in the midst of a society honeycombed with difficulty and social misery and anxiety. A more monstrous proposal than this of placing the liberty of the Press—even in the smallest town in Ireland—at the mercy of a couple of Resident Magistrates under the Summary Jurisdiction Clause of the Coercion Bill has never been brought before the House, and I hope that it will either be scouted from the Bill, or that the exercise of the duties of the Press will in some way be protected and guarded by the insertion of a Proviso. The truth is, that if the Government carries out the provisions of the Bill in the spirit indicated in the drawing of the measure, they will lock up the leaders and spokesmen of the Irish people, while they allow the landlords to exact rents which will make them comfortable, whether they retain their estates or sell them. This is wholly unfit statesmanship for Ireland. It cannot heal any of Ireland's sufferings. It must aggravate the distrust of the people. It will take from them all hope as long as the Act exists, and it will go hard; but it will drive them to resort to practices which all deplore, in the despair of obtaining otherwise any remedies. I cannot believe that, if passed into law, the Bill will last long; and I can assure hon. Members on the Ministerial Benches that it will be the enduring effort of the Liberal Party to get rid of it, and banish it, as a blot and a scandal in our legislative system. Of course, we shall have little assistance from the Party opposite; and what am I to say of the Liberal Unionists, from whom I might naturally have expected more? I have never been a believer in judicious mixture. I like to have remedy neat. I remember hearing an Irish Member say of a good, but very voluminous witness before a Committee upstairs—"He forgets that we cannot strain the whisky out of the punch." I am afraid that out of judicious mixtures there never has yet been strained enough remedy to do much good to the people of Ireland. But the Liberal Unionists on their own principle are bound, above all others, to make their first effort to remove grievances in the hope of avoiding coercion. So long as the Government continue the policy they are now proposing, so long the people of Ireland will be condemned to a miserable existence—to a state of constant disaffection and mistrust—to a condition of demoralization which can only sink them lower and lower in the scale of nations. From that danger the Liberal Party are most anxious to deliver them, and it will be their constant endeavour to rescue the Irish nation from the deplorable condition into which such legislation as this will plunge them. I believe that national wrongs are redressed, national grievances are assuaged, and national good achieved by the natural action of freedom. But you are placing the Irish people in such a position that they can hope for nothing except from actual revolt. So long as this law lasts the whole system of your government lies under condemnation. So long as it lasts you will go on more and more demoralizing the Irish people. You do not altogether deny the existence of social and agrarian injustice. I suppose your theory is that social wrong may be trusted, even under the most repressive laws, to drag itself to light like some wounded creature in a deadly swamp, and to force itself on the attention of the world. That is not my belief. Free institutions need to be maintained, in order that we may know where and why social injustice exists. Quiet that is arrived at by repressive laws is damnified by the consideration that in the process social wrong will be strengthened, and evils will be concealed that ought to be brought into the blaze of publicity. The sympathies, and affections, and hopes of the two nations can never, in such conditions, be brought into happy harmony, or devoted to the achievement of those aims which should be the aims of every civilized nation.

Mr. GEDGE (Stockport): Sir, about a fortnight ago the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) told us, in tones of jubilation, that this Bill was already "aborted." The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has expressed, in a letter to which I will call attention presently, his expectation that the meeting in Hyde Park on Monday would ring its death knell. All the same, the measure appears to me, at the present moment, to be in a very lively condition, and to look as if it would survive the post-mortem examination which the House is holding over it. I propose to call attention to two speeches made by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian—not for the purpose of proving his inconsistency—for with regard to him, and to the other right hon. Member, I should consider it quite superfluous to take any pains to point out their political gyrations—but because I find, in the first of those speeches, that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian laid down the lines upon which the introduction of such a measure as this may be justified; and I hope to prove, from the second, that there is ample justification for it, at the present time, upon those very lines. But I will first call attention to the letter which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has recently addressed to *The North Eastern Daily Gazette,* and, through that paper, to the world at large. In it he states—and what, in his case, is a very great wonder, he states clearly and in unmistakable language—his objections to the passing of this Bill. In the first place, he objects, upon the ground that it will be carried by England against Wales, Scotland, and Ireland! What an un-Constitutional idea. One really would suppose that this was a House of Convocation, in which we voted by Orders! It is about 600 or 700 years since Wales was a separate Principality; and, therefore, if Wales is now to be regarded as a separate portion of the Empire, entitled to vote independently, why should not the people of Yorkshire, or of Devonshire, set up a claim to be distinct nationalities on their own account? It would be about as sensible to insist upon smokers and non-smokers voting separately, and to require a majority of each set, to the passing of a Bill. I contend, Sir, that Members of this House, when once elected, represent not their own constituencies only, but the whole country. It is the will of the whole country that is to be regarded, and not the will of the separate constituent parts; and I see no reason why the will of England, which contains three-fourths of the population, and far more than three-fourths of the wealth, of the United Kingdom, should be set aside in favor of that of the smaller Divisions of the Kingdom. The population of the Metropolis alone exceeds that of the whole of Ireland; and are the Representatives of London, who, as it is, are far too few in proportion to those of Ireland, not to be allowed even that weight which these fewer numbers give them? The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian next remarks that this Bill ought not to pass, because it will only be carried by the votes of a body of householders who have never before enjoyed the franchise; but, surely, such an objection as that might be raised with equal force against the passing of any Bill that is presented to this Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman did not scruple to pass, in 1881 and 1882, very stringent coercion measures by the aid of a Parliament in which the householders were only partially represented; and does he, who himself extended the franchise to the others, pretend that they are less competent to pass any measure which they believe to be necessary? He next objects that the Bill is presented without any attempt on the part of the Ministry to show exceptional, flagrant, or growing crime. As that objection has already been refuted over and over again in the course of the debate, I will not now trouble the House with any remarks upon it, but proceed to the next extraordinary statement of the right hon. Gentleman. He alleges that this is "the worst, and most insulting, and the most causeless Coercion Bill ever submitted to the House;" and in a letter which appears in this morning's paper he calls it "unexampled." I challenge the right hon. Gentleman, when he speaks on Monday night, to show that the measure of coercion which he himself brought in and carried in the year 1881, under the euphemism of a "Protection of Persons Act," was not far more stringent than the Bill before the House, inasmuch as it suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and gave the Lord Lieutenant the power—upon which he acted—of imprisoning hundreds of persons, without trial, for an indefinite period; and I also challenge him to show that the Act which he brought in and carried in the year 1882 did not contain provisions which were far more stringent and severe than those contained in this measure, with only two exceptions, upon which I will remark presently. In explaining his reasons for proposing the Bill of 1882, the right hon. Gentleman made the first speech from which I propose to quote. He said—

> "The main basis for the Bill is not the recent murders, but the regard which we have for the misery that has been scattered far and wide among the body of the population. Our legislation is for the sake of the people of Ireland themselves."

That is the present state of things. It has been abundantly shown, in the course of this debate, by the evidence given before Lord Cowper's Commission, by the Report of that Commission, and by other proofs, that there is widespread misery in Ireland occasioned by the tyranny of the National League; and this Bill is designed, amongst other purposes, to put an end to the oppression of that League, for the sake of the people of Ireland themselves. The right hon. Gentleman went on—

> "He admitted that then the jury system had failed only with regard to agrarian crimes."

The same state of things exists now. With regard to breaches of the ordinary law, convictions are obtainable—with regard to agrarian crimes they are not; and here, again, the Government follow the lines laid down by the right hon. Gentleman. Next, he described his Bill as—

> "A measure intended to put down all intimidation arising out of the action of bodies of men joined together to ruin their fellow-countrymen, for the fulfilment of their legal duties and obligations. This alone will recommend the passing of the Bill to the vast majority of the House."

I doubt whether the right hon. Gentleman himself can deny, at the present moment, that similar intimidation exists in various parts of Ireland. On his own showing, that intimidation alone is a sufficient reason for passing this measure. The hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) had stated in the course of the debate "that not coercion, but justice to Ireland, was wanted." "Yes," said the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian; "but justice must be justice to all—justice to everyone; and, unfortunately, this includes the use of force for the punishment of evil-doers and the praise of all who do well." We, Sir, aim by this Bill at doing justice to all in Ireland by putting them under the protection of Her Majesty's Government, and freeing them from the irresponsible government of the National League. I will now turn to the second speech to which I promised to refer. Just in this month of April last year the Home Rule Bill of the late Government was introduced to the House. The right hon. Gentleman gave three main reasons why he considered it to be necessary to give Home Rule to Ireland. The question, he said, was one of social order in Ireland. He declared that agrarian crime was then almost at low-water mark, though it had increased since the expiration of the Crimes Bill in the previous September. He pointed out that agrarian crime was not so much a cause as a symptom — a symptom of bitter mischief — of which the manifestation was threefold. First, it was impossible to obtain the finding of a jury in the case of agrarian crime according to the facts; next, he pointed out that evictions, however just or unjust, stood alike discredited, and became the occasion of lamentable transactions—by which euphemistic term he described Boycotting, outrages, and murders; and, thirdly, he stated that it was not to be denied that there was great interference in Ireland with private liberty in the shape of intimidation, which he called "a rude and unjustifiable remedy;" and this intimidation prevailed to a material and painful extent, and the result was to weaken generally the respect for law and the respect for contract. These three things formed the bases for the introduction of the Home Rule Bill. Will the right hon. Gentleman, on Monday night, venture to deny that these three things exist still, to at least as great an extent as they did in April last? Why, since then, the Plan of Campaign has been invented, with all its attendant mischiefs; and it must be pointed out, although the hon. Member who spoke last (Mr. E. R. Russell) failed to understand the argument of my right hon. and learned Friend below me (Mr. Plunket), which obliges me to explain it, that if it be contended that this condition of things in these three particulars no longer exists, then there is no longer any ground for the introduction of a Home Rule Bill, though that remedy for the afflictions of Ireland, having been rejected conclusively by the country, is still pertinaciously pressed upon us by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. The right hon. Member urged strongly that something must be done—that something was imperatively demanded. Well, we agree with him, but contend that, as his own plan was rejected by the country, it is necessary that something else be done; and that something else consists, Sir, in this measure and the remedial measures introduced by the Government in the other House. You may object to our remedy as wrong; but you cannot, at the same time, recommend your own remedy and call ours causeless. The country, at the last General Election, decided that Ireland must be governed, not by Home Rule, but by Imperial Rule, and the Government are bound to carry that decision into effect; and it is the duty of the House, therefore, to give the Government sufficient power to enforce the judgment of the constituencies on this question. There are only two points upon which this Bill is stronger than that which was carried by the right hon. Gentleman in 1882. The first point is, that this Bill is to be permanent—that is to say, it is to be as permanent as any other law which is passed by Parliament. Ours are no laws of the Medes and Persians. With regard to this Bill, as with regard to other Bills, if ever the time arrives when Parliament shall deem that the measure is unnecessary, it will be in their power to repeal it. It has been said that the House of Lords will not enable them to do so. Sir, I give no weight to that argument. I cannot believe for a moment that if ever this House, representing the country, considers it wise to repeal an Act of this kind, the House of Lords will insist upon maintaining it in force; and if they do, why even then, as has been so ably shown by my right hon. and learned Friend below me (Mr. Plunket), this House alone can practically put an end to the Bill, because it only comes in force when the Lord Lieutenant has issued a Proclamation, and his Proclamations are liable to a veto by either House of Parliament, and must be brought before them within a limited number of days. To talk, therefore, about coercion "for ever and ever," is really nonsense, and it comes with an ill grace from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who objected to the expression "a fundamental law," when applied to the Act of Union, on the ground that even that Act and any other Act might be repealed whenever Parliament thought fit. The next point, of greater stringency, is the provision in the Bill that the venue may be changed to England. Well, Sir, it has been admitted on all sides that juries in the case of agrarian crimes cannot be depended upon to give a verdict according to the evidence; and that trial by jury has failed in Ireland. The very name of jury—from "jurare, to swear"—means that juries are men who have sworn to return a verdict according to the evidence; and the moment they fail to do so, whether through fear or through favour, they cease to be jurors as contemplated by the law. Something, therefore, must be done to secure a fair trial; and this provision, so much objected to, is in accordance with the whole principle of the Union. We Unionists contend that the Irish, the English, the Welsh, and the Scotch are all one people, and that, due provision being made for the payment of counsel and witnesses, there is no reason why an Irishman should not be tried by English jurors, or an Englishman by Irish jurors. If Irishmen are tried in England, they will still be tried by their fellow-citizens, and the most ardent reverencers of trial by jury would surely prefer a trial by jury to a trial by Judges, who are not, in any sense, the peers of the accused. But if any hon. Member will move in Committee to give to the prisoner the choice of being tried, either in England by a jury or in Ireland by Judges, I should not object to such a clause. Again, although it is true that in the Act of 1882 the venue could only be changed to a different part in Ireland, that could be done on the mere motion of the Attorney General; but under the Bill now under discussion, if the Attorney General desires to change the venue to another part of Ireland, or the two Attorney Generals desire to change it to England, the prisoner has a right of appeal to the Court, which, on cause being shown, will reverse the decision of the Attorney Generals, and try the prisoner where he desires; and I have no doubt that any Court of Justice will hear the case fairly and decide in accordance with what is right. And now, Sir, without going over ground already occupied by previous speakers, let me show briefly one or two principal points in which this Bill is milder than the Act of 1882, and much less insulting. I will take the case of "dangerous associations." Under the Act of 1882, as soon as the Bill passed, any person in any part of Ireland who was a member of any unlawful association was guilty of an offence, and might be brought up, convicted, and punished, at once; but under this Bill the district must first be proclaimed, and then the dangerous association must be proclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant. These Proclamations will give due warning, and no one can be accused, or convicted, of an offence against the law unless he shall, after warning, continue to take part in the dangerous association; and these Proclamations are all to be subject to the control of each House of Parliament, and, therefore, each House of Parliament will be implicated in every Proclamation. But the Bill is called coercion, and that term to some people condemns it without trial. I object, Sir, to the term coercion. Every law expresses the will of the majority, imposed upon those who dislike it, and every law of a restraining character is coercion. There is nothing between the policeman and politeness. If there were no policeman and no Sheriff's officer, any man could laugh at and break the law. Laws without force behind them are futile. Every change making the Criminal Law stricter is coercive, and all such changes are as perpetual as this

Act is to be; and yet who ever talks, when such changes are made, of the liberties of the people being interfered with for ever and ever? I turn now to the right hon. Member for South Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair). He objects to this Bill on the ground that it crushes out the aspirations of the Irish people. I, Sir, am proud to have Irish blood in my veins. I have Irish relatives, and many Irish friends, and I should be most sorry if their aspirations were to be crushed out; and, after hearing the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, I read the Bill again to see what aspirations it does crush out. I found that all that the Bill crushes out are aspirations to intimidate; aspirations to get another man's property without paying for it; aspirations to murder; aspirations to commit crime fatal to the interest of the country; aspirations to prevent their fellow-subjects from living their own lives, going about their own business, and keeping their own contracts without let or hindrance. Those are the aspirations which the Bill crushes out; and in saying that they are those of the Irish people, the right hon. Gentleman libels the whole nation. Next, he challenges us thus—Differentiate, if you can, between the action of the late Chief Secretary for Ireland towards the landlords and the Plan of Campaign towards the tenants—the result being the same, a reduction of 15 or 20 per cent from the rents. Sir, I do not think the differentiation so very difficult. The difference is just the difference between giving or taking; between the conduct of a man who persuades you to give a sovereign to a poor honest fellow whose wife is sick or whose cow is dead, and the action of a scoundrel who meets you in a dark place, and, blunderbuss in hand, demands that sovereign from you under pain of knocking you down. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds went on to speak of the unrighteous and cruel agrarian laws in Ireland. I wonder whether the right hon. Member knows anything about the agrarian laws in England? In agricultural matters, the law in Ireland has been, for many years, far more favourable to the tenant than it is in England; and yet, until the last few years, under that law, agriculture in England has been prosperous. All the points on which the Irish agricultural law differs from the English are in favour of the tenant. They have been altered in his interests several times by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his Party; and if they are unrighteous and cruel, they are unrighteous and cruel against the landlord —which I do not deny—and not against the tenant. Then it is objected by hon. Members opposite, as an argument against the Bill, that it has been brought forward in the interests of the landlords to make evictions easier. This is not the case; but, if it were, it would, in my judgment, form no objection, for a long experience has taught me that it is to the interest of a defendant, even more than of a plaintiff, that the law should enable the latter to ascertain and obtain his just rights in the easiest and most inexpensive manner. The cost of involved or protracted proceedings falls upon the defendant. Now, under the existing law in Ireland, evictions can be obtained on very few grounds, and the principal of these is the non-payment of rent; and I assert, without fear of contradiction, that no man who is capable of discriminating between right and wrong can deny that the non-payment of rent due for land is, unless in exceptional circumstances, a sufficient and proper ground for the tenants being allowed no longer to remain in possession of that land. I do not say this on my own authority only. An Irish Member, much respected in his time (The O'Donoghue), laid down the same doctrine in 1870 in the debate upon the Land Bill; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, in speaking on that Bill, quoted with approval his "admirable language." It must be further borne in mind that, for the most part, rents in Ireland now have been settled either under the Act of 1870, on the passing of which the right hon. Gentleman declared that every tenant in Ireland would be answerable for his contracts, or under the Act of 1881, which has lowered the rents in the interests of the tenant. That Act of 1881 was passed by the late Prime Minister, as a panacea for all the ills of Ireland. It gave the tenants the "three F's" for which they had clamoured in 1881, but which he then refused and denounced as ruinous to the best interests of the country. And now, six years after he conceded them, it is brought as a grave charge against the Government that they do not alter the fair rent then fixed, or diminish the fixity of tenure. Lastly, it is objected to this Bill, that the law in Ireland, which it aims to enforce, ought not to be enforced, because it comes from a foreign source. It seems to me, Sir, that if a law be right in itself, the source from which it comes matters little. The Ten Commandments themselves come from a foreign source. ["Oh! oh!"] What! was not Arabia a foreign country, and are not the Jews foreigners? But the law does not come from a foreign source. It is passed by an Imperial Parliament, in which Ireland is more fully represented than either England or Scotland; and as this Bill is intended to prevent breaches of that law, and of the Sixth and Eighth Commandments which it embodies, I intend to give my cordial support to it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby considers the Bill dead, and as he certainly did not come here to praise it, I suppose he came to bury it. But it will be found on Monday night that it is alive; and I look forward confidently, when this Bill and the concurrent remedial measures have been passed, to a better state of things in Ireland than we have seen for many years past.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, that the passing of the Bill now before the House would tend to create disorder and to endanger that unity and integrity of the Empire which its advocates professed to be so anxious to maintain unimpaired. If the Irish people believed that it was the deliberate will of the English people to make them perpetual serfs in their own country, their Representatives would watch for every opportunity of resisting the attempt by legislation of this kind to enslave them, even though the consequences might be fatal to themselves. But there was such a vitality in the Irish race that they were always able to foil the efforts of those who sought to subjugate or oppress them. The Irish Members had no desire to nurture crime or to stand between the Government and the punishment of criminals. They had constantly denounced the perpetration of crime; but, although the English Press was ever ready to give prominence to intemperate remarks, it failed to give any prominence to their denunciation. If, as was sometimes erroneously alleged, they were disposed to foster or encourage crime in Ireland, they would themselves be the first victims of such an evil practice under that future system for the government of their country to which they were looking forward so hopefully. The present Bill was not aimed at the repression of crime, but at the maintenance of excessive rent, together with the domination of the landlords, while it would repress the voice of those who spoke a word upon behalf of the poor and the oppressed. The rack-renting landlords, who had for many long years been impoverishing their unfortunate tenants, and who did not disdain to take American dollars as well as English coins, now that their exorbitant rents had been cut down to some extent by a tribunal set up by Parliament, asked for some compensation or solatium. Therefore it was that the hon. and gallant Member for the Isle of Thanet (Colonel King-Harman) received the appointment of Parliamentary Under Secretary, while another rack-renting landlord of County Kerry, as he understood, had been lately hovering about that House in hopes of obtaining the post of Permanent Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. The Divisional Resident Magistrates were at the beck and call of the landlords. They often dined with them, and got their fishing and shooting from them, and, in fact, were little better than the water bailiffs and game preservers of the landlords. Who received the magistrates at the railway station? Why, the district inspector, who was a friend of the landlord. What chance of escape would a prisoner have who was brought before such men under this Bill? As to the recent appointment of the Under Secretary, he said that was most suggestive. The hon. and gallant Gentleman, in a speech he made some years ago, advocated Home Rule and a higher patriotism than even the welding together of Catholic and Protestant, and in which he comprised Nationalists, Home Rulers, and the Repealers in the one term "lovers of our common country," said that each one should cast aside personal ambition, and work for the common weal—that he had fought hard already, and was prepared to fight again in any capacity—even he (Mr. E. Harrington) supposed in that of Under Secretary. Allusion had been made to the abnormal state of crime in Kerry, a Division of which county he had the honour to represent. He had never hesitated to denounce violence and crime, while he was always an uncompromising opponent of injustice and wrong. But if hon. Members considered that in Kerry, since 1880, under the baneful operation of eviction clauses, 14,000 persons had been rendered homeless, every one of whom was more or less nearly connected with men still living in that county, they would easily understand what provocation to crime existed among a people once the most peaceful in Ireland. He sincerely wished that crime would cease in the country; but he also wished that the Government would address themselves to the roots of the cause of their crime. Let them pull up those roots and the crime would certainly disappear. The course the Government were taking by this Bill would, however, have a contrary effect, and it was the bounden duty of the Irish Members, in those circumstances, to protest against this last and fatal mistake in the government of their country. They knew enough of their fellow-countrymen to be able to confidently assert that if the Irish people were given a fair chance, —if they were given such a measure of self-government as was consistent with their dignity as a nation and, at the same time, with the safety, honour, and integrity of the Empire—if, in short, they were freely and fully trusted, the British people would never regret it; for by adopting such a course they would secure the gratitude and goodwill of the Irish people at home and abroad, and would make yet more solid, compact, powerful, and prosperous this great Empire, which Ireland had helped to build up.

Mr. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) said, he thought the House might congratulate the hon. Member for West Kerry, who had just sat down, as to what he had said about denouncing crime. He could not have said anything more calculated to enlist the sympathy of hon. Members on the Government side of the House. He only wished that the Irish Members would express their opinions upon this question in their own country in language similar to that just used by the hon. Member, for, if they did so, it would go a long way towards making such a measure as that proposed unnecessary. It appeared to him that the hon. Member and those who preceded him drew a somewhat gloomy picture of the present Bill. The hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow (Mr. E. R. Russell) drew a most highly-coloured picture of it when he said if it received the Royal Assent not only would the Irish Press be muzzled, but all the Irish Members would be locked up. He (Mr. Seton-Karr) did not know what would happen in a case of that kind; but, as he read the Bill, he did not share these apprehensions. He desired, in a few words, to express his own feelings, as one of the English Members who had been appealed to by hon. Members of the Opposition to give their reasons for supporting this Bill. They had also been appealed to by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, who, in the first stage of this debate, desired hon. Members to consider the responsibility of recording their votes. He had no desire to under-rate the responsibility which every individual Member incurred when called upon to record his vote at every stage of the Bill, for he did not think it was possible for anyone to over-rate that responsibility. But he did not think that when they considered the position of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian they could accept the force of his appeal, for it was impossible for them to forget that the right hon. Gentleman himself had no freedom of choice. He himself by his action a year ago in joining the forces of the Leader of the Irish National Party, the hon. Member for Cork, had actually burned his bridge behind him, and was now left without a means of retreat. That being so, in spite of the weight and position of the right hon. Gentleman, he did not think much of his blandishments, nor did he suppose that hon. Members of this — the Ministerial — side of the House would get rid of their responsibility by joining the Followers of the right hon. Gentleman. But there was one special reason why he had ventured to address the House on the subject before it. He represented a constituency in a county (Lancashire) which had a particular interest in Bills affecting the welfare of Ireland. From the geographical position of Lancashire it was of the utmost importance to the working men of that county whether we had on our western shores an Ireland which was orderly and prosperous, or disorderly and under the baneful influence of the National League. There were thousands of Irish working men who did not care two straws about Home Rule, and had no sympathy whatever with the League or with what was termed Irish nationality. But what those Irishmen did care about was that they should be left free to obtain honest employment and to earn the best wages they could for the support of themselves and their families. He would like to remark that Lancashire Members on the Government side of the House had been returned in a great measure by Lancashire operatives and artizans. The senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) was very fond of taunting Members on the Government side of the House with the phrase that they were the Representatives of Class and Privilege. He did not know whether the senior Member for Northampton desired to be taken as a serious politician; he indulged more in the romance of politics, but it could not be denied for a moment that the Lancashire Members on the Government side represented a very great and important section of national industry; and he would ask the House whether it did not consider that Lancashire operatives and artizans had as great a right to be considered as a portion of those engaged in the management of the country, as the shoemakers of Northampton or the miners of Cornwall? These unemployed Irishmen now found themselves, by the operations of the National League, destitute, and the first place they came to was the county of Lancaster, where were the Lancashire operatives and artizans, and ran down the rate of wages. He did not complain for a moment of the Irish working men doing this, but he did complain of the operation of the National League, which, by coercing the people, endangering individual liberty, and by driving capital out of the country, drove these people to England, who might otherwise have been happy and prosperous and obtained employment in their own country. Sir Redvers Buller in his evidence stated that in a district of Killarney there were 1,685 acres of farm land on which grass was growing to waste, from 950 acres of which tenants had been evicted. This was only one instance out of many in which land was thrown out of cultivation and men deprived of legitimate employment by the operations of the National League. Therefore, Lancashire Members, three-fourths of whom sat on the Ministerial side of the House, had a special responsibility in the matter of Irish legislation. He believed this Bill would tend to paralyze political agitation and to draw capital back to Ireland. He was at a loss to understand how the Bill would coerce any law-abiding subject. Nor did he see how the Government could have introduced such a measure at an earlier date. They were bound to allow certain time after their accession to Office to elapse before they could assert the insufficiency of the ordinary law and apply for special powers. If extraordinary powers had been asked for earlier, they would not have been granted by the House of Commons. The Bill was said to be an infringement of the liberties of the Irish people; but no one who listened to the speech of the Solicitor General for Scotland on Wednesday, could have the slightest doubt in his mind that the only liberty which the Bill would infringe was the liberty of committing crimes with impunity. True, the present Bill did not propose to remedy Irish grievances; but that there were Irish grievances was conceded, and remedial measures would follow. The speeches of Opposition Members seemed to betray a confusion between the spheres of penal and remedial legislation; these were necessarily distinct; still he, for his part, would have had considerable hesitation in voting for the Bill if it had not been accompanied by remedial legislation. [*Cries of* "Oh;" *from Irish Members.*] He trusted that hon. Members opposite would give those on this (the Ministerial) side of the House credit for the same sincerity in their convictions that they claimed for their own. Macaulay, in the debate of the Repeal of the Union in 1832, said—

> "On what occasion did I ever refuse to support any Government in repressing disturbances? It is perfectly true that, in the debates on the Reform Bill, I imputed the tumults and outrages of 1830 to misrule. But did I ever say that those tumults and outrages ought to be tolerated? I did attribute the Kentish riots, the Hampshire riots, the burning of corn-stacks, the destruction of threshing machines to the obstinacy with which the Ministers of the Crown had refused to listen to the demands of the people. But did I ever say that the rioters ought not to be imprisoned, that the incendiaries ought not to be hanged? I did ascribe

the disorders of Nottingham and the fearful sacking of Bristol to the unwise rejection of the Reform Bill by the Lords. But did I ever say that such excesses as were committed at Nottingham ought not to be put down, if necessary, by the sword?"

Lord Macaulay continues in these words—

> "I would act towards Ireland on the same principle on which I acted towards England. In Ireland as well as in England, I would remove every just cause of complaint; and in Ireland, as in England, I would support the Government in preserving public peace."

It seemed to him that these few words contained a principle which hon. Members opposite often forgot. The question really resolved itself into a question as to the sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament and the Crown. Mr. Austin, a great authority upon the subject, held that "a sovereignty only exists where the subjects render habitual obedience to the Sovereign." Could any rational man contend that at the present moment the Irish people were rendering habitual obedience to the Imperial Parliament and the Crown? A great many facts had been laid before the House in support of the Bill. There were two instances of the state of things going on in the sister island which had made a deep impression upon him. These were the refusal of the jury to convict the authors of the Plan of Campaign, and such continued outrages as the persecution of the Curtin family. This refusal of the Jury to convict in the face of the clearest evidence, and in the face of the declaration by the highest legal authorities in the land that the Plan of Campaign was an illegal conspiracy—was, to his mind, the clearest possible proof that the Jury System in Ireland had hopelessly broken down. The brutal and continued persecution of the Curtin family was an example of the lengths to which Boycotting was carried in Ireland. Reference had been made to Boycotting on the part of the Primrose League, and this was compared to Boycotting in Ireland. Now, the most that was alleged was that there was exclusive dealing in some agricultural districts of England. He denied that this was so; but admitting for the sake of argument that there was, yet such Boycotting on the part of the Primrose League, supposing it to exist at all, was at any rate not supported by murder and outrage as a sanction, and in this respect it differed entirely from Boycotting in Ireland. If the Government could not maintain law and order in Ireland what was the use of remedial legislation? Remedial legislation would in that case be rendered a farce, and political agitators would be the arbitrators of whether a law was right or wrong. The Liberal Unionists had been referred to as casuists; but he believed that the other portion of the Liberal Party must look nearer home for the modern school of casuists—to the men who used all their sophistry and arguments in order to persuade the House and the country that anarchy and rebellion could be excused by the existence of grievances. Mr. Henry Maine, in the following words has recorded the fate of the original School of Casuists. He tells us—

> "All that philosophy of right and wrong which has become famous or infamous under the name of Casuistry had its origin in the distinction between mortal and venial sin."

He then goes on to say—

> "Casuistry went on with its dexterous refinements till it ended in so attenuating the moral features of actions, and so belying the moral instincts of our being, that at length the conscience of mankind rose suddenly in revolt against it, and consigned to one common ruin the system and its doctors."

If history is to teach us anything, these words are a prophetic warning of the fate likely to overtake the modern school of Political Casuists. They had been told that the Nationalist Members represented the voice of Ireland; but he could not admit this if, as was said, they were to "judge people by their friends." Who were the friends and who the opponents of that body of Nationalist Members? Their friends were the members of the American Fenian organization whose headquarters were at Chicago, and whose high priests were Egan and Ford. This was the organization from whom the Irish Members drew their pay, and whose orders they obeyed. Their opponents were the men bound to this country by every tie of race, religion, and interest which made the true union of a nation, and they were men who represented to a great extent the commerce, intelligence, and industry of the country. He alluded, of course, to the Representatives of loyal and prosperous Ulster. If that was so, then the Nationalist Members could not be said to represent the voice of Ireland.

It was idle to say the Bill infringed the liberties of the subject. That was already the case. It was idle for hon. Members from Ireland to threaten rebellion and civil war; they had that already. He, therefore, intended to support the Bill by all means in his power, because he believed it would prepare the way for remedial legislation, and it was the only alternative to the repeal of the Union and the ruin of Ireland.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E. Heywood) said that if the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had had experience of the business of Lancashire he would not have made the observation she did with reference to the employment of Irishmen in Lancashire. Not many years ago there was an organization specially got up to obtain and bring over Irish people to Lancashire, and it would be impossible to-day to carry on the industries of that county if the Irish people were banished from it. When standing as a candidate for his constituency, which contained a population of nearly 60,000 persons, he, in 1885, told his constituents that having regard to the declarations of Lord Salisbury, the then Prime Minister, in his (Mr. Hoyle's) opinion "coercion in Ireland was a thing of the past," and he was re-elected in 1886 upon the same policy of governing Ireland without coercion. "No coercion" was the policy they endorsed and approved, and every day he now received undoubted proof that his constituents were still of the same mind. He would ask hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House who had transferred their sympathies to the other side whether they were in touch with their constituents? He was an elector of the Rossendale Division. He knew Rossendale well. The men born and bred on those hill sides had clearly defined opinions, and they had never learned to conceal them. The noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale would not say the men of that Division gave him a mandate to vote for coercion. And the same thing might be said with regard to other constituencies. Nobody would say the precedent set by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Judge Advocate General in resigning his seat for Brighton was a precedent to be always followed. Every hon. Member was the keeper of his own conscience, the guardian of his own honour. He could only say for himself, that if he should happen to find himself out of sympathy with the views of his constituents he should feel himself bound to return to them the trust they had reposed in him. After all that had been said and written on the Irish Question, there were a few prominent facts which plain people would remember when able and ingenious speeches were forgotten. What was the condition of Ireland at the time of the Union? Of every 100 persons in the United Kingdom 67 were in Great Britain and 33 in Ireland—whereas now 86 out of every 100 were in Great Britain and 14 only in Ireland; or, to state it in another way, the population of Great Britain had increased threefold, while that of Ireland had actually diminished. There were fewer people in Ireland to-day than there were 86 years ago. Great Britain was increasing in wealth and in all that accompanied wealth, while Ireland was sinking deeper and deeper in poverty. Of the whole population of Ireland at that moment 1 in 11 was a pauper. It is in these circumstances the Government introduce the Coercion Bill before the House. Ireland is, in fact, bleeding to death, and the Government are seeking to load her with chains and provide her with handcuffs and prison cells, that her population may be further depleted by the deportation of 1,000,000 more to Manitoba or elsewhere. The people of Great Britain were now beginning to see, and to say, that no change consistent with the integrity of the Empire could be worse than the system which has nothing better to show than these miserable results of 86 years of Union. On the one hand were seen the rent-payers sunk in hopeless and helpless poverty, and on the other the rent-receivers living in luxury at the West End of London or in Paris or elsewhere. In the short span of one generation more than 3,000,000 of people emigrated from Ireland, seeking that bread in other lands which was denied them in their own. We honoured Englishmen who declined rank and wealth in foreign lands rather than forswear allegiance to the Crown and Government of this country; should we be less generous, less just, to Irishmen and Irishwomen in America? They thought of the homes of their childhood, where they first learnt the elements of that religion which is their stay in this life and their hope for that which is to come. Ireland holds, and shall hold till the Resurrection morn, the remains of their honoured dead. Can we wonder that people with such memories and such hopes should deny themselves, and send money to help their own kith and kin to a brighter future in the land of their birth? What was the object of this Bill? It had many objects. One of them was to smash the Plan of Campaign. He felt it his duty to say now what he had said in the country—that he could not defend that Plan. It might be legal, or it might be illegal—that was a question for the Courts; but there were features in the Plan to which he could not give his assent and consent. But then he was not an Irish tenant. He had never been compelled to make bricks without straw. It was idle for the Government to say that the Bill of the hon. Member for Cork last year would not have met the worst cases, as that amounted to an admission that the hon. Member was too moderate in his demands. The Government and the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale were in the seat of power, and they could have made the Bill one to do justice to tenants of all sorts without working injustice to landlords. Some such Act would have done much to alleviate the situation, and he could only account for the Government's inaction by the dual control: one Cabinet sittting in Downing Street and another in Devonshire House. But, in his judgment, the Plan of Campaign was a mistake in tactics on the part of Irish Members. If the people had paid what they could, and a series of evictions had been the consequence, they could then have told the story of wrong from Land's End to John o' Groat's House in all its fulness and fidelity to detail, but without exaggeration. The story, so told, would have enlisted the hearty sympathy of the English people, and in that way attained the object of their desires. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, by his Bill of last year, had opened a new Court of Appeal where Irish grievances could be heard as they had never been heard before. The householders of Great Britain formed that Court of Appeal. Hon. Members opposite might not like that Court, but they were bound to respect it, for the Court had power to enforce its decisions. There was only one thing that would prejudice that Court against Ireland, and that would be violence in word or deed, spoken or done, by Irish Nationalists. Every angry word, every ebullition of temper, hindered justice to Ireland. Violence was the stock-in-trade of hon. Members opposite, and if that ceased their occupation would be gone. The delight of the Tory Party was violence by Nationalists in action or in word. If violence were to cease there would not be a shadow of a pretence for the Bill now before the House. That was his candid opinion. The Government might smash the Plan of Campaign, and even secure outward quiet; but what of the hearts of the people? From that Table Prayer is offered every day at the opening of our proceedings, for—

> "The publick wealth, peace, and tranquillity of the Realm, and the uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within the same in true Christian love and charity one towards another."

Will this Bill unite and knit hearts together? Not so; hearts are not won that way. The government of Ireland could never be a success until the hearts of the people were won. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian had done a greater work by uniting the people of Great Britain and Ireland in bonds of mutual trust and confidence, than had been effected by the great Frenchman who had united the East and the West in closer bonds by the cutting of the Suez Canal. The Government had other objects in view in the preparation of this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire said, in an earlier part of this debate—

> "The hon. Baronet who seconded the Amendment had spoken of the fall of prices. If the tenants were poor and houseless, it was the duty of all classes of the community, and not the landlords or one class alone, to bear the burden of their relief. [An Irish MEMBER: Protection.] Well, I have no objection to that."

When he heard those words fall from the lips of the right hon. Gentleman, he was filled with amazement. Was it intended, then, by this Bill to lay burdens on the whole community that landlords might be eased? The right hon. Gentleman even has no objection to Protection, if so his class may be relieved. He could not have believed it if it had not been so plainly admitted by one holding a prominent position on the other side of the House; but then he remembered a speech made by the Prime Minister. Lord Salisbury had said, in "another place," speaking with reference to the alleged fall in prices—as the right hon. Member for Lincolnshire did—

> "If it should turn out that the Courts have made blunders, and that it is impossible to pay the rents, I think it is not the landlords who should bear the loss. I think this would be one of the cases for the application of the principle of purchase by the State."

The noble Marquess, therefore, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire appeared to be ready to burden the community at large in order to secure the landlords' profits. Read in the light of utterances like this, the legislation of the Government, it was plain, had for its object the extraction of impossible rents for the benefit of the landlords. He believed the Government and their supporters were fighting against nature—that legislation of that kind could not endure, but whatever the future of that Bill might be, he and the constituency which he represented, had made up their minds they would have no share in the responsibility attaching to the enactment of the measure before the House. They would let the guilt and the shame of passing it rest on its supporters only.

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): In looking back at the past history of Ireland, one of the most unfortunate of the circumstances that have attended the dealings of this House with my country has been, that in the legislation that has been prepared by successive Governments, the influence that legislation will have upon Party has generally to my mind exceeded the desire to succeed in passing legislation that would be beneficial not merely to Party but to Ireland. On these matters hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite and myself take entirely different views, but perhaps they will admit this—in fact they are bound to admit this—that I am just as much an Irishman as many of them are, and therefore the welfare of my country may possibly be as much to me as to any of them. Therefore when I hear hon. and right hon. Gentlemen pointing to various inconsistencies in the past, I confess that that is a course of debate that has very little interest to me. I believe both Parties in the past have been inconsistent, and both have made very great mistakes; but what we have to confront now is what Ireland is at the present moment, and how the dangers and difficulties of the situation may be successfully encountered. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) was at one time a great stickler for law and order, he was once Home Secretary, and brought in a very strong Coercion Bill, and at that time he vented all the vials of his wrath on his present allies who sit below the Gangway. His love for law and order, his respect for law and order, might have been estimated easily by a visit to Grafton Street, which at that time was full of policemen for the protection of the right hon. Gentleman from the country he desired to benefit and was about to emancipate; but now the right hon. Gentleman pours out all the vials of his wrath upon that unfortunate class to which I have more the misfortune than the honour to belong. In his speech to-night he talked of the abominable transactions that characterize the dealings between Irish landlords and their tenants. Now, I consider it an act of unparalleled injustice on the part of the right hon. Gentleman thus to assail Irish landlords because they attempted to carry out the bargain that he himself helped to make. It may be that the plan he helped to form is defective, probably it is, but the House must remember that the bargain made by Her Majesty's Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was a Member, binds us, whether we wished it or not, to a certain agreement binding on either side, and now because certain landlords carrying out this agreement ask their tenants, and try to force their tenants, to abide by the agreement, the right hon. Gentleman gets up in his place and calls this action of Irish landlords "abominable transactions." I say this is most unfair; I say it is most unjust. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby did not always hold the views he has put forward to-night; there was a time when he held views of a very different description, and that in the immediate past. The right hon. Gentleman is not here, but perhaps he may read a report of my speech. I do not quote for the purpose simply of annoying him, but for the purpose of self-defence; when we are attacked we are bound to hit back. In and out of this House, I have made many speeches against Home Rule, and probably I shall make many more. It follows, therefore, that I have devoted some time and attention to the best method of making anti-Home Rule speeches. I have come to the conclusion, after mature study, that the very best, the most effective means of making a speech against the Home Rule Party is to study the speeches of right hon. Gentlemen who now sit on the Front Opposition Bench. They have spoken with infinitely more eloquence, with infinitely more ability, than I can hope to attain; and no man has distinguished himself more in that line than has the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and he has particularly distinguished himself lately by making more speeches than any of his Colleagues on that Bench. Now, I will only make this quotation—from which I cannot refrain; it is so appropriate to the present occasion—from a speech of the right hon. Gentleman delivered at Blandford on September 28, 1885. This is not ancient history. Listen to what he says—

> "The Tory Government are tenants at will of Mr. Parnell, and he is a hard task-master. One of the leading Irish Members (Mr. Healy) said he thought both the English Parties were dishonest, and that the Irish Party should consider which of the rogues it would be their interest to deal with. I am happy to say he has come to the conclusion that it is not the Liberal Party."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Where was this speech delivered?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I have already said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, at Blandford, in the County of Dorset. It was delivered in September, 1885. We are now in 1887. Two years have elapsed, say a year and a-half; and after mature consideration, hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway have come to the final conclusion that they will pin their faith to and adopt the permanent association of the "Radical rogues." I wish the right hon. Gentleman joy of his present associates. He appears to me to be in an interesting situation. He has divested himself of his Unionist garments, and he does not appear to be at all comfortable in his Home Rule clothes. But I will venture to say this, that the Liberal Party will not finally come to the conclusion that permanent association with hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway will be the best course for them to pursue to elicit in future the final and permanent support of the English people. I do not intend to remark further upon the speech of the right hon. Gentleman except to say this, that I think his speech resembles—had a family resemblance—to most of the speeches that have been made in attacking the Bill of Her Majesty's Government. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite in attacking the Bill find themselves under two difficulties. They must attack the Bill upon some principle or other. If they attacked the details of the Bill, it might lead one to suppose that if those details were altered or changed they might be induced to support the Bill. But we learn from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) that nothing can induce him to support the Bill, that no change or alteration will satisfy them, but that his Party will use every form of the House to oppose every clause, every word of the clause, and to destroy the Bill if possible. Then, on the other hand, if they attack the Bill on principle, they are met with this difficulty, that the country has already decided the point—[*Cries of* "When?"]—at the last Election, in July. I shall put it as fairly as I can from my point of view. The great point in urging the question of vital importance that undoubtedly attaches to the measure now before the House, the great thing to do is to try and find some common point of agreement on which both sides can take their stand. I believe there is a common ground—and only one—on which we can all meet, and that is that the present condition of Ireland cannot be permitted to continue. We all agree as to that. Hon. Members below the Gangway have said again and again that the present condition of the country cannot continue. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has said it over and over again and so have all his Colleagues. In order to meet the difficulty two policies have been submitted to the country—the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and the policy of the Unionist Party. It is a very simple question, and it was put to the country in the plainest, clearest manner last July. The solution proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his followers was this, that Ireland should be handed over to the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) and the National League. I do not say the proposal was made in these words, but practically that was what it meant. It was repeatedly stated. Lord Spencer, for instance, placed it very clearly when he said at Newcastle that the National League prevented the Irish people from receiving remedial legislation provided by this House, that they will always prevent it; and that for this reason, as the League had proved stronger than the English Government, Ireland should be handed over to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway. And remember this, that in support of this handing-over policy, the hon. Member for Cork had this great advantage that he can never have again—he had the immense power, influence, and the eloquence we all admit of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian at his back. With all his influence, all the power of his great name, the right hon. Gentleman went over England with unparalleled assiduity and with incredible power—I admit that—proclaimed right, left, and centre his Home Rule doctrine. He applied to it every argument he could imagine, yet with all these advantages the English people decided that this was not the settlement they would have. But there is only one other alternative. I admit that. Either you must give up Ireland to the National League, or you must put the National League down. I am speaking now simply from the point of view in which the Party with which I act in Ireland regard this question. We thoroughly understand this question in Ireland, and hon. Members opposite understand it too if only they would speak as they think—they know that this question is a stand-up fight between the Parliament of England and the National League. [An hon. MEMBER: "Poor Parliament!"] I think the hon. Member who interrupts me with the exclamation "Poor Parliament," will find that the Parliament of England is still sufficiently strong to crush the National League. Well, the policy of Her Majesty's Government has been violently assailed; but I think perhaps the two most powerful attacks made upon it—and I think right hon. Gentlemen opposite have that opinion—were in the speeches of the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and the hon. Member for Cork. Now, the hon. Member for East Mayo made a very eloquent, and an almost incredibly—a supernaturally—long speech, which lasted, I think, for three hours and a quarter. In that speech he examined in detail and with great care the relations between landlords and tenants in Ireland, as set forth in the Report of the Royal Commission. But I did not so much pay attention to that portion of the speech; the part of the speech that struck me most was that in which the hon. Member informed the House what he intended to do if this Bill passed, because there is a certainty about it, there is no doubt whatever that this Bill will pass. Therefore, to me, as an Irishman living in Ireland, it is a matter of some importance the course the hon. Member for East Mayo and those who follow him will take when the Bill does pass. What does he say? "I for one would rather abandon"—[An hon. MEMBER: Read from the beginning."] Nay, I cannot be expected to read through a three hours and a-quarter speech. This is the part of the speech that touches the point I am referring to, and, subject to correction, I assume the report is correct—

> "I, for one, would rather abandon all public agitation, and leave the country, or if the people were brave and willing, I would lead them to battle."

In fact, the hon. Member intends to stand up and confront the Irish people and to say when this Bill passes—"If you will not follow me to battle, I'm off." This is exactly what he says. He is, no doubt, a brave man—he makes very eloquent speeches in this House. I have great respect for the entire sincerity of the hon. Member for East Mayo. I believe he is just as sincere in supporting his view as I hope hon. Members will believe I am in supporting mine. The hon. Member is accustomed to make observations of that kind. On a previous occasion the hon. Gentleman made a speech of wonderful eloquence; and I remember that towards the end of that speech he insinuated that he was going over to Ireland to arouse the Irish people, and to urge them to take up the gauntlet which England had thrown down. What did that result in? It resulted in the hon. Member going over to Ireland and appropriating the moneys of other people. I do not say that the hon. Gentleman kept it in a dishonest way.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): I rise to Order. I want to know whether the hon. and gallant Gentleman is in Order in saying, as he has just said, that a certain Member of this House went over to Ireland and appropriated money which did not belong to himself?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Member immediately qualified the expression which he used.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I think the hon. Member's ears are sharp enough and long enough to have caught what I said. No one can conceive that I ever intended to convey that the hon. Member for East Mayo went over to Ireland actuated by dishonest motives. But undoubtedly—and nobody can deny it—the hon. Member for East Mayo did intercept rents which were supposed by the law of the land to belong to the landlords. He now informs us that he intends to go over to Ireland, and urge the Irish people to take up the challenge which has been thrown down to them. I very much doubt whether, with the knowledge we have of his followers, the hon. Member for East Mayo will adopt the course referred to in his speech. The hon. Member has certain grounds to go upon in order to estimate the fighting powers of the Party with which he acts. In the Fenian rising—the rising of the Patriotic Party in 1867—a body of 87 patriots, who were engaged in waging war upon England, were surrounded, captured, and marched into town by three policemen. That is not the kind of army I should like to lead. The Patriotic Party, however, had their revenge, for, by a sort of Nemesis of fate, after a lapse of years, 85 patriotic Irishmen very nearly succeeded in capturing the House of Commons, and it was only by a majority of 30 that they were defeated in their attempt. With that remark I will dismiss the threat of the hon. Member for East Mayo. I do not think it will ever come to that. With regard to the Bill of Her Majesty's Government, I do not intend to deal with those details which have already engaged the attention of the House; but I will say something with regard to the clauses which I think render the Bill really worth something, and will make it a greater success in Ireland. I do not believe that if the Government had only been able to show the House and the country the amount of crime in Ireland, it would have justified them in bringing forward a measure of this description. Although, unfortunately, crime has increased, it has not increased to such an alarming extent as would, to my mind, have justified Her Majesty's Government in introducing so stringent a measure. But the social condition of Ireland at the present moment is a question which does not depend altogether upon the amount of crime in the calendar. The clauses to which I refer are Nos. 6 and 7 of the Bill, which deal with the special proclamation of certain associations; and that is the part of the Bill which, I believe, will ultimately be found efficacious in restoring law and order in Ireland, and in making her a credit instead of a disgrace to the Empire. Sir, Her Majesty's Government have brought in this Bill to restore the law of the land to its proper place; and I consider the proper place for the law of the land is that it should be absolutely supreme in all parts of Her Majesty's Dominions. Unfortunately, the law of the land is not supreme in a great part of Ireland. In a great many parts of that country—over, I should say, at least one-half of it—the law of the Land League is far more powerful, far more feared, and far more obeyed than the law of the Crown. It is with that that the House must deal. We have in Ireland an organization known by the name of the Land League. [An hon. Member: The National League.] Well, the National League, which holds its courts and which has a network of organization all over the country. It holds its courts, it issues its decrees, and it admits of no appeal whatever against its decisions; it summons before it those who offend against its laws, and it inflicts pains and penalties to which the Irish people have to submit at the present moment, because the law of the land is not sufficiently strong to defend the subjects of the Queen against that unauthorized law which has welded a yoke round their necks which this Bill seeks to break. I am perfectly well aware that that statement has been denied. The hon. Member for the Dock Division of Dublin—[An hon. Member: The Harbour Division]—I beg pardon; the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. C. Harrington), who is the Secretary of the National League, has denied the accuracy of that statement. He wrote a letter to *The Times* on the 26th of February, 1886; and in that letter the hon. Member said—

> "During the past three years I have been in charge of the central office of the National League, and the management of and responsibility of that organization have chiefly devolved upon me. Under those circumstances, I hope I may be permitted to give the most unqualified contradiction to the statements made with such authority in the House of Lords that branches of that organization hold courts, inflict fines, and have a procedure and appeal system of their own."

That was the statement of the Secretary of the National League and the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin. I will relate to the House a circumstance which occurred in Ireland the year before. The account of it appeared, on the 12th of September, 1885, in a paper which probably hon. Members opposite will récognize—*The Cork Weekly Herald*—a good staunch Nationalist paper. It was the case of a Mrs. Hudson, the owner of an hotel—the Pigott Arms, at Rathkeale. She was Boycotted in a very rigid manner. She had supplied goods to emergency men and had supplied cars to Sheriffs' officers. Mrs. Hudson gave the following pledge on the recommendation of Father Liston—

> "I hereby promise that in future I will not, either directly or indirectly, supply emergency men with any goods whatever, and will not give my car to the Sheriff. Furthermore, I regret having done so in the past.—(Signed), Eliza Hudson. Witness, Thomas Liston, Catholic curate; witness, William O'Shea, Catholic curate."

All perfectly legal and correct, as hon. Members will see. Then a letter was addressed to the local branch of the League by the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin, after the hon. Member had the case submitted to him, and after this lady had made the *amende honorable.* This is what he said—

> "I think your branch should be satisfied with the pledge given by Mrs. Hudson in the presence of Father Liston and Father O'Shea, and that the guarantee of the former should be received with the respect which Father Liston has entitled himself to in connection with the League.—Thomas Harrington, Secretary."

The result of that reply was to reinstate the hotel in public favour, and there is no longer any prohibition against staying there or against trading with the establishment belonging to it. People are now allowed to go to the hotel quite freely. This occurred in a part of Her Majesty's Dominions which is supposed to be subject to the law of the land. Yet we see that such is the state of fear which exists in Ireland, that an organization of this kind can prohibit ordinary trading with an hotel, and ruin an unfortunate woman unless she comes forward and declares that she will never offend again, and expresses her regret that she should ever have offended at all. Now I contend that this Bill will crush that organization. I am sorry to have to trouble the House with so many quotations, but facts are coming to light which have never reached the imagination of some hon. Gentlemen, and especially the hon. Member who spoke last (Mr. Seton-Karr); and I am convinced that if the Radicals of this country who follow the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian realized the condition of affairs in Ireland, their manliness and their sense of right and justice would prevent them from forging a yoke for the necks of the Irish people. Here is another case. Here is the case of a man named O'Connor. This unfortunate man took a farm from a man named Walsh in 1879. I ask the House to pay particular attention to this case. Walsh was evicted from a farm on the estate of Lord Egmont, and O'Connor paid £600 for it. A part of the £600 went to pay arrears of rent, and about £200 went into the pocket of the man Walsh. [*Laughter.*] Well, why should not arrears of rent be paid? The man O'Connor went into the farm, and immediately a public meeting of the Land League—as the organization was then called—for it was before the National League was started, was held, at which Father Sheehy, a gentleman whose name is now well known, presided. O'Connor had offered £150 down as compensation to Walsh, besides the £600 which he had already paid. Walsh was not personally approved to the offer—I am now quoting from *United Ireland*—but the Committee of the League considered it insufficient, and the offer was refused. Now mark what followed. In one week afterwards, when the Land League was threatened with suppression, the offer would have been accepted by Father Sheehy, but the money would not then be given. The Committee decided that the sum of £600 should be paid by O'Connor to Walsh, under the penalty that he surrendered the farm. Five weeks later it was announced that Walsh had been handed the sum of £600, being the amount of money awarded by the Committee as compensation to Walsh, and the Chairman was afterwards made the temporary custodian of the money. Is it not an incredible thing that in any part of this country a man like O'Connor, a Catholic farmer—for, as far as religion is concerned, I am bound to admit that the League dispense their justice with perfect equality on both sides—that this man should be summoned in this way, and fined £600 without any rhyme or reason whatever? I have been reading from reports in *United Ireland* in 1885—four years after the Land League had been suppressed. The National League had then been constituted, and it practically endorsed the Acts of its predecessor, the Land League. In point of fact the National League and the Land League have a continuous existence. It is one organization and one society—the only difference having been to drop the word "Land" and substitute "National." It has the same leaders, the same objects, the same organization, the same officers, and it derives its support from the same quarter. This is a pretty strong case. I will give another case which I consider to be of immense importance. I am sorry to trouble the House, but it is absolutely necessary that I should quote these cases in order to make out my own case, which is also that of 2,000,000 Irishmen who sympathize with me. The National League—which I desire to see suppressed, and which I believe I shall see suppressed — is not an organization which, as has been euphemistically stated, supports the oppressed tenants against rapacious landlords; but it is an organization which crushes down the very name of liberty in Ireland. I will now refer to the evidence given by two brothers who were examined before the Royal Commission.

MR. T. M. HEALY: What are the names; are they anonymous names?

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: They are anonymous, and are called in the Report of the Commission Brothers No. 1 and No. 2. But as Her Majesty's Government have brought in the Bill now before the House, these brothers have sent to me to say that they are willing that I should give their names. I now, therefore, propose to give the names of all the parties concerned in the transaction, and I hope that this will satisfy the hon. Member for Longford. The names of these brothers are Patrick and Robert Troy, and they reside at Shandrum, in the County of Cork, where there exists a very active branch of the National League. They purchased a farm adjoining their own holding from a man named Burke, and paid him £180 for it. Burke was a very old man, and as he had been in the habit of working his own land, he was glad, no doubt, to get the money. The farm consisted of 17 Irish acres, and was let at £2 per acre. The brothers Troy left the man Burke in this house and gave him a certain amount of garden ground around it. After they had paid him the £180 Burke thought he would like the farm as well, and he and his family thereupon offered opposition to the occupation of the land by the Troys, and built up fences upon the farm with the view of making the occupation objectionable. The brothers brought an action against him, and obtained in the Superior Court a writ of eviction. The Troys thus came to loggerheads with the National League. The National League decided that these men Troys should give up the land, which they had then occupied for five or six years before these extremities were resorted to. The National League decided that the brothers Troy should not only give up the land, but that they should pay, in addition to the £180 they had already paid, a further sum of £150 as a fine for having occupied the holding during that time. They were asked by the Commissioner why they did not make a stand against this form of oppression, and their answer was—

> "How could you expect us to do what the Government of England could not do?"

The President having asked what the witness meant, the latter replied—

> "How could we stand up against Boycotting, and against public opinion, when the Government would not protect us any longer."

Now, I say that when this Bill becomes law the tenant in Ireland, however weak he may be, will find that the law of the land is able to protect him against such monstrous oppression as this. These brothers Troy were not satisfied with the decision of the National League, and they did not like to lose the money they had earned by the sweat of their brows. Well, these brothers Troy brought their case before a meeting of the National League held in the town of Liskeel, and they got up at the meeting to appeal to their fellow farmers against the monstrous tyranny to which they had been subjected at the hands of the League. Well, what happened? The chairman of the meeting took one of the Troys by the scruff of the neck and thrust him into the mud. That is a good indication of what would happen in an Irish House of Commons on College Green. In order to show the minuteness with which the National League enters into these matters of Boycotting, I will now refer to the case of a Mr. Macnamara, who was himself a member of the National League, and was on its committee, but who was accused of having spoken to one of the Troys. Mr. Macnamara explained that the occasion on which he had committed the offence was the close of a transaction with one of the Troys, with whom he was a partner in the ownership of a bull, one-half of which had been Boycotted, while the other half was free. In question 19,464 in the Commissioners' Report one of the Troys was asked if he went into Court; and his answer was—

> "Yes; I think there were three cases before mine, in each of which there had been an infringement of the law of the League."

Those cases were disposed of, and then one of the brothers Troy stated that he had asked the members of the League what they were going to do, and whether they intended to rob him entirely of his hard-earned money. The reply was that there was a rule against him for £100, and he was asked to give up the land, being told that if he gave it up he would not have to pay anything. Troy said that it was a cruel shame, and that he had no money that he had not earned honestly by the sweat of his brow. And now let me ask hon. Members to listen to this—

> "They said that I must give up the land—that I was in an iron cage, and that they would squeeze it upon me."

According to the right hon. Member for Derby to-night, if this Bill passes it will not be men like the Troys who will be in an iron cage. The right hon. Gentleman told us that this is a Bill simply to enable landlords to enforce the payment of their rents to the utmost farthing; but I wish to show that this measure, when law, will break the fetters and chains which have been binding the Troys and thousands of men like them. It has been often said out-of-doors, and even in this House, that if the Irish tenants were free to vote as they please it is very much to be doubted whether many of them who now vote for hon. Members who sit below the Gangway opposite would vote for them in future. What I maintain is that if this Bill passes the Troys, and thousands of men like them, would be able hereafter to record an unfettered vote, and votes which would in reality have regard to the welfare and happiness of the country. And now I come to another part of the subject. It is time, I think, that the people of this country and this House should clearly understand what the position of the National League is. It must not be supposed that the National League is altogether on the side of the tenants in their fight against the landlords. I have shown that the National League interferes with the tenants themselves in the exercise of the rights to which they are entitled by law. Now, I want to know what the National League really is, whence it derives its power, and what is its history? In the name of all those who think with me in Ireland, I accuse this National League of being a criminal conspiracy, established for the purpose of carrying out criminal objects and aims, and of being mainly supported by traitors, murderers, dynamiters and criminals on the other side of the Atlantic. I am aware that this is a very serious charge to bring against any organization, especially when we know that the National League includes among its members Representatives sitting in this House. Therefore, in making a charge against this organization it is necessary that the House should fully understand against whom the charge is directed. The National League was originally devised by John Devoy and Michael Davitt in 1879, and was furnished with funds collected by Patrick Ford for the purpose of carrying on the Fenian war. The hon. Member for Cork was—as the scheme was originally devised—to carry on a

Constitutional movement on Constitutional lines in Ireland. He accepted the presidency of the League, and went over to America from Ireland in 1880 to explain to his friends there what the Constitutional movement meant. He was met, on his arrival in America, by Patrick Ford, the advocate of dynamite and murder; and, for my own part, I will say of Ford that he has never changed. Ford met the hon. Member for Cork, and the hon. Member made a speech at Brooklyn on the 19th of February, 1880, which has been largely quoted since, and in which he referred to a speech made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian at Dalkeith in the winter of 1879. In that speech the right hon. Gentleman said that it was not until a great gaol had been broken open in Clerkenwell, and policemen murdered in the execution of their duty at Manchester, that the attention of the English people had been drawn to the state of Ireland, and that the question of the Irish Church had been brought within the range of practical politics. The hon. Member for Cork, in his address, called attention to these words, and told his audience that they admitted that it was necessary to act in some extraordinary and unusual manner before any question could be brought within the range of practical English politics. He went on to say that they would be obliged therefore to make the situation a very hot one indeed; that they desired to enforce the movement between the strict lines of the law, and to prevent the people from resorting to bloodshed; but it was impossible to suppose that a great cause like theirs could be won without shedding a drop of blood. Now, I will leave it to the House to decide what that language meant. The hon. Member for Cork, in that speech, deliberately stated that it was his intention to come over to this country and make the situation a very hot one indeed, arguing that the murder of the Manchester policeman and similar acts were justifiable. After that speech the hon. Member for Cork went to Washington, and a committee was appointed to meet him there, one of whom was a person named Coghlan, who had been condemned to death at Manchester, but whose sentence had been commuted to penal servitude, and who was afterwards, unfortunately, let loose. Another was a Colonel Burke, who was inside the Clerkenwell Gaol when the explosion there occurred. Soon afterwards the hon. Member went to Toronto, and in a speech which he delivered there he repeated the words about the necessity of acting in an extraordinary manner before this country could be made alive to the real wants of Ireland. He then returned to Ireland, and an executive committee was formed in Dublin. Among them were seven shining lights — the hon. Member for Cork himself, the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), and, later on, the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor), and then there were—and I ask the special attention of the House to these names—Mr. Patrick Egan, Mr. Thomas Brennan, Mr. Michael Boyton, and Mr. P. J. Sheridan. If hon. Members have pieces of paper and will write opposite the names M for murder and T for treason, they will be able to understand the character of those who were the associates of the hon. Member for Cork on the executive council. I do not accuse the hon. Member for Cork and his friends, who sit opposite to me, in this House with ever having imbrued their hands in blood, but I do accuse them, in the House of Commons, of having associated with men whom they knew to be murderers.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I rise to a point of Order. I wish to ask if the hon. and gallant Gentleman is entitled to say, of any Members of this House, that they have been associates of men whom they knew to be murderers?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Gentleman is making now very serious charges. I have nothing to do with the nature of the charges which the hon. and gallant Gentleman chooses to make, providing that he makes those charges in a manner which does not contravene Parliamentary rules. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has not said anything yet which would call for my interference. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has made charges, the gravity of which I cannot conceal from myself, but of course it will be competent for hon. Members to answer those charges in debate, and it is not my duty to interfere.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I wish to ask, then, if it is competent for a hon. Member in this House to charge other hon.

Members with being associated with men whom they know to be murderers provided that he does it on his own responsibility. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: The charges the hon. and gallant Gentleman is now bringing are in connection with the Bill before the House. They are not made at random in the course of debate; they are supposed to be in some way connected with the subject-matter which is now before the House. That being so it is not my duty to interfere, however grave I consider the charges to be.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to say that if the hon. and gallant Gentleman persists in the statement that I have associated with men whom I know to be murderers, I shall tell him across the floor of the House what I think of him, no matter what the consequences may be. [*Cries of* "Order" and "Name!"]

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I have no hesitation in telling the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite that if he refers to me, he is a liar. [*Loud cries of* "Name!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: Of course it is impossible for me to overlook an expression of that sort. The hon. and learned Gentleman is perfectly entitled to meet and refute the charges that have been brought against him; but for an hon. Gentleman to use across this House the expression which the hon. and learned Member has just used towards an hon. Member on the opposite side, is conduct which I am bound to notice unless the hon. Gentleman withdraws the expression. [*Cries of* "Withdraw!"] Does the hon. and learned Gentleman withdraw the expression?

Mr. T. M. HEALY (seated and speaking with his hat on): I am not entitled to rise, Sir, until you have sat down.

Mr. SPEAKER having resumed his seat—

Mr. T. M. HEALY: If, Sir, you rule that the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite is entitled to say of me in my place in this House, that I associate with men whom I know to be murderers, I can only meet it in one way. If you rule, Sir, that charge to be in Order, my expression is, in my opinion, equally in Order. If you rule the hon. Member to be out of Order, naturally my expression will fall to the ground.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not so. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has made a distinct charge—a charge which I repeat is of the very gravest nature, and which entirely rests upon the responsibility of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has made it; and it is his duty, having made it, to try and substantiate it, if he can. I say it is his duty, having made it, to try and substantiate it. But I cannot allow the hon. Member for North Longford in the course of debate to make use of the expression which he has used across the floor of the House. It is competent to him to meet the charge, and, if he can, to prove the unsubstantiality of the charge so made; but the expression which the hon. and learned Member has used is one which offends against the Rules of Debate, and I must ask him to withdraw it, or I shall have but one course to take. Does the hon. and learned Gentleman withdraw the expression he has used?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As I understand, I am accused of associating with murderers, knowing them to be such. [*Cries of* "Order!" and "Withdraw!"] You, I understand, Sir, rule that I can be called an associate of murderers, and you further rule that I am not entitled to deny that expression. You rule that I am not entitled to say that if the hon. and gallant Member persists in making that accusation, he is a liar.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. and learned Member has again used the expression. He is entitled to deny the charge with all the earnestness in his power; but he is not entitled, in denying it, to make use of an expression which contravenes the Rules of this House. The question I ask the hon. and learned gentleman is—Does he withdraw?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: There is only one way of meeting that accusation, and I decline to withdraw. [*Loud Home Rule cheers, many Irish Members rising from their seats and waving their hats.*]

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Healy, I Name you. [*Cries of* "Shame!"]

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.): I protest, Sir, against the language of the hon. and gallant gentleman opposite, and against the Naming of my hon. and learned friend.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I have only one duty to discharge after the intimation you, Sir, have made to the House, and that is to move—"That Mr. Healy be suspended from the Service of the House."

MR. T. M. HEALY: Mr. T. M. Healy.

MR. SPEAKER: "That Mr. Timothy Michael Healy be suspended from the Service of the House." All who are of that opinion say "Aye" [*Ministerial cries of* "Aye"]; the contrary, "No." [*Cries of* "No," *from the Home Rule Members.*] The "Ayes" have it.

MR. W. REDMOND: I say that he is a liar, too.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 118; Noes 52: Majority 66.

AYES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beckett, E. W.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. De la Poer
Blundell, Col. H. B. H.
Brookfield, Mr. A. M.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burghley, Lord
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, J. A.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Courtney, L. H.
Cranborne, Viscount
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Davenport, H. T.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dyke, rt. hn. Sir W. H.
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. J. F.
Ewart, W.
Fergusson, right hon. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fraser, General C. C.
Gent-Davis, R.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Gray, C. W.
Grimston, Viscount
Halsey, T. F.
Hardcastle, E.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Holloway, G.
Holmes, right hon. H.
Hornby, W. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Ker, R. W. B.
Kerans, F. H.
King-Harman, Colonel E. R.
Knowles, L.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, W. G. E.
Manners, rt. hn. Lord J. J. R.
Matthews, rt. hon. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mulholland, H. L.
Noble, W.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, W.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Plunkett, hon. J. W.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Ritchie, rt. hon. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Round, J.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Sellar, A. C.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hon. W. H.
Stanley, E. J.
Stewart, M. J.
Tapling, T. K.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tottenham, A. L.
Verdin, R.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P.
Yerburgh, R. A.

TELLERS.

Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

NOES.

Blane, A.
Channing, F. A.
Clancy, J. J.
Commins, A.
Conway, M.
Cox, J. R.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Ellis, J. E.
Ellis, T. E.
Fenwick, C.
Foley, P. J.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Graham, R. C.
Harrington, E.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, T. M.
Hooper, J.
Hunter, W. A.
Illingworth, A.
Joicey, J.
Labouchere, H.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leake, R.
Lockwood, F.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Donald, P.
Morgan, O. V.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Hanlon, T.
O'Kelly, J.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Pugh, D.
Quinn, T.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Reed, Sir E. J.
Reynolds, W. J.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, E. R.
Sexton, T.
Smith, S.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stevenson, F. S.
Sullivan, D.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Tanner, C. K.
Tuite, J.
Wallace, R.
Watt, H.
Wilson, H. J.

TELLERS.

Biggar, J. G.
Redmond, J. E.

MR. SPEAKER: I must now call upon the hon. and learned Member for North Longford to withdraw.

An hon. MEMBER: You are afraid to hear the truth.

An hon. MEMBER: Why do you not call upon the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh to withdraw also?

Mr. T. M. HEALY rose from his seat on the third Bench below the Gangway on the Opposition side, and, bowing to the Chair, withdrew from the House, amid loud cheering from the Irish Members, who again stood up and waved their hats.

Colonel SAUNDERSON rose to resume his speech amid Home Rule cries of "Withdraw!" The hon. and gallant Member said: I must say, Sir, I feel very considerable surprise, not at the temper displayed by some hon. Members opposite, but at the temper displayed by certain hon. Members. [An hon. Member: Who are they? *and cries of* "Order!"] I did not apply the term to all hon. Members opposite.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I told you what you were. [*Cries of* "Order!" *and interruption.*]

Mr. SEXTON: The hon. and gallant Member said that I was a member of the Executive Council of the League, and in that capacity I associated with persons whom I knew to be murderers. Does he persist in that statement, or does he withdraw it?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: P. J. Sheridan was a murderer, and he was a member of the Executive Committee of which the hon. Member for West Belfast was also a member. [*Cries of* "Withdraw!" *and great interruption.*]

Mr. SEXTON: Did I know him to be a murderer? Did I ever associate with any man whom I knew to be a murderer? [An hon. Member: "Withdraw, you coward!"] [*Cries of* "Order!"]

Colonel SAUNDERSON (who rose amid cries of "Withdraw, withdraw!"): I have made a statement that a known murderer belonged to the Executive Committee, against whom a true bill was found for complicity in the Phœnix Park murders, and that Committee must have known that this man was a murderer. [*Much interruption, and renewed cries of* "Withdraw!"]

Mr. SEXTON: Then I say you are a wilful and a cowardly liar. [*Home Rule cheers and great disorder, the Irish Members again rising and waving their hats.*] If I had you outside the doors of this House I would dash your statement down your throat, and thrash you within an inch of your life. [*Loud and continued Home Rule-cheering, and cries of* "You coward, withdraw!"]

Mr. SPEAKER: I have a duty—and a very painful one it is—to perform. If the hon. Member for West Belfast does not withdraw the expression he has just used, I must take the same course with him that I have just taken with the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. [An hon. Member: Do it; *and cries of* "Order!"] I must ask hon. Gentlemen to keep order while I am endeavouring to do my duty. If I can do anything to allay the feeling which exists, I am sure I would willingly do so. I did not understand that the hon. and gallant Gentleman charged the hon. Member for West Belfast directly or indirectly—[*Cries of* "Oh!"] It is for the hon. and gallant Member to say whether he did so or not.

Mr. SEXTON: Mr. Speaker——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! I ask the hon. and gallant Member to speak first, and to say whether he did so? [An Irish Member: Withdraw, you blackguard!]

Colonel SAUNDERSON: Again I say that it is perfectly indifferent to me, and I do not care what hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite say of me. [*Cries of* "Answer the Chair!"] With regard to the question which the hon. Member for West Belfast asks me, and which I understand was this, whether I stated that he personally knew a man at a certain time to be a murderer—[*Renewed cries of* "Answer the Chair!" *and* "No, no!"]

Mr. SEXTON: The question I asked was whether I ever wilfully or knowingly associated with any murderer. [*Cries of* "Answer a plain question!" "Answer the Speaker!"]

Colonel SAUNDERSON: The House will see, evidently, that it is perfectly impossible that I could have made that accusation. [*Cries of* "You did!"] Mr. P. J. Sheridan was a man against whom an accusation of murder was made, and against whom a true bill for murder was found. [*Loud cries of* "Order!" "Answer the question!" *and interruption.*]

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman whether he charges the hon. Member for West Belfast with associating with a man whom he knew at the time to be a murderer? That is the expression which originally gave offence, and I understand the hon. and gallant Gentleman to repeat it. I ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman whether he makes that accusation?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: Certainly I do not wish to make an accusation against the hon. Member for West Belfast which I cannot substantiate. [*Cries of* "Withdraw!"] If I said so, all I can say is that it was an expression unhappily worded. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" "Withdraw!" "That won't do!"] I did not wish to accuse the hon. Member of associating with a man whom he knew to be a murderer at the time.

Mr. SEXTON: At any time? Why do you not withdraw honestly?

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I understand the hon. and gallant Gentleman to say that he withdraws the expression as affecting the hon. Member for West Belfast. The hon. Member for West Belfast, I must say, has used in repelling the charge a very offensive and un-Parliamentary expression; but I cannot conceal, of course, that the provocation he received was a very strong one. As the right hon. and gallant Member withdraws his expression, the right hon. Member for West Belfast will, I hope, withdraw the un-Parliamentary expression which he used.

Mr. SEXTON: Sir, I shall withdraw the expression, reserving to myself the right to act, if such an accusation is repeated against myself or any of my Colleagues.

Mr. LEAKE (Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe): Sir, I rise to Order. I wish to ask whether, in these distressing circumstances, the result that has been attained with reference to the hon. Member for West Belfast would not also cover the case of the hon. Member for North Longford who has been suspended?

Mr. SPEAKER: The question just put by the hon. Member is not a question of Order. The House has already come to a vote on the subject, and it is out of my bounds. Of course, it is for the House to act, in the matter, as it thinks right, and it can take any course it may deem to be expedient. [*Calls for the* "First Lord" *from the Home Rule Members.*] The rescission of the vote cannot be taken now, but it may be taken at the next Sitting of the House, if the House thinks proper.

Mr. SEXTON: Then, Sir, I beg to give Notice that, considering the withdrawal which the hon. and gallant Gentleman has made, I will, at the next Sitting of the House, move that the vote of the House excluding my hon. Friend the Member for North Longford be rescinded.

Colonel SAUNDERSON, continuing his speech, said: When the interruption occurred I had arrived at this point, that an executive committee of the National League was formed in Dublin, of which seven gentlemen whose names I have mentioned were the chief officers, and among them a certain gentleman was prominent—Mr. P. J. Sheridan, who was a notorious murderer. He was an intimate associate, at that time, of the hon. Member for West Belfast, of the hon. Member for Cork, and, at the end of the operations of that committee, of the Member for East Donegal. They ought to have known that he was a murderer. It was made pretty plain; a true bill was found against him for complicity in the Phœnix Park murders, and he had to fly for his life. Patrick Egan and Thomas Brennan, the secretary of the hon. Member for Cork were also implicated in the Phœnix Park murders. Mr. Egan was the treasurer of the Land League, and he also absconded. After that the hon. Member for Cork, and some of his Colleagues were put in gaol, and the Land League was suppressed.

Mr. SEXTON: Before then and not after.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: But the papers of the Land League were never inspected by Her Majesty's Government. What revelations they might have made we have never been able to know, and it is not for me to discuss; but some of the deficit which was over £100,000, might have been accounted for. I will not weary the House further by continuing the history of the Land League. It was after that, in the year 1882, that the National League was started, and again hon. Members opposite, as delegates of the National League, went across the Atlantic—I find no fault with them for that—in order to establish a connection between the newly-formed organization and their American supporters. I find that on the other side of the Atlantic Mr. Patrick Egan, Mr. Patrick Ford, the notorious advocate of dynamite and murder, and Mr. P. J. Sheridan, the confessed murderer and former associate of the hon. Member for West Belfast and the hon. Member for Cork, were present; and I find also that the gentlemen sent over from the National League to represent the National League had a habit, in America, of meeting with those gentlemen and taking part with them in public meetings and private re-unions. I find, for instance, that the hon. Member for Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond) was one of the delegates. That hon. Member went over there and met some of the advanced patriots, and the hon. Member for West Belfast also went over to America and had the felicity of seeing Mr. Patrick Egan, the former treasurer of the Land League, elected as president of the Clan-na-Gael, a murderous association in America.

MR. SEXTON: The hon. and gallant Gentleman is now repeating his calumny in another form. I saw Mr. Patrick Egan elected President of the Land League Association of America, which has nothing to do with any murderous association. I must ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman to withdraw that expression.

MR. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. and gallant Member will withdraw it.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Certainly; but I do not know exactly what I have said that is contrary to the Rules of the House.

MR. SEXTON: The hon. and gallant Member said that I was present when Mr. Egan was elected President of a murder society in America. Why does not the hon. and gallant Gentleman, like a man, withdraw the offensive expression?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The inference derived from the hon. and gallant Gentleman's remarks, no doubt, gave offence, and just offence, to the hon. Member for West Belfast. It is that expression which I ask the hon. and gallant Gentleman to withdraw.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: I have no desire to say anything offensive to the hon. Member. [*Cries of* "Withdraw!"] I do not know what I am asked to withdraw. I want to arrive at a fair understanding. [An hon. MEMBER: "You coward!"] I made a statement, which appeared in *The Irish World*, that Mr. Patrick Egan was elected President of the Clan-na-Gael Society, and that the hon. Member for West Belfast was present. If the hon. Member says that is untrue I will withdraw.

MR. SEXTON: I know nothing whatever of the Clan-na-Gael Society. I am entirely ignorant of it. I do not know whether Mr. Egan is connected with it or not.

DR. FOX (King's Co., Tullamore): I rise to Order, Sir. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has alluded to the election of Mr. Egan as President of the National League in America. I was a Member of the National League of America for five years. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh"] Yes, and I am very proud of it. I was present at the convention with Mr. Egan and the hon. Member for West Belfast, and I beg to tell the hon. and gallant Member that when he makes that statement I brand him as a liar. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I understood when the hon. Member rose that it was to a point of Order. He cannot interrupt the debate by entering into any personal explanation now. The remarks he is making may be the subject for a speech in reply, but they are not to a point of Order.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON again rose and was received with loud cries from the Home Rule Benches of "Withdraw!" The hon. and gallant Gentleman said, I do not know what I am to withdraw.

MR. SEXTON: Mr. Speaker, I feel, sir, the great difficulty of the position in which you are placed, and personally I am thankful for your intervention; but I must ask you to direct the hon. and gallant Member to withdraw the statement he has made.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: What statement?

MR. SEXTON: The statement that I was present when a gentleman was elected President of a murder association.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON again rose amid cries of "Withdraw!" and "Name!" He said: What I stated was that the hon. Member for West Belfast was present when Mr. Patrick Egan was elected President of the Clan-na-Gael Association, and that that is an association which advocates murder.

MR. SEXTON: Then I must repeat my expression that the hon. and gallant Gentleman is again a liar. [*Much interruption and disorder, and cries from the Home Rule Benches of* "Withdraw, you coward!"]

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I trust the hon. and gallant Member will withdraw; that some respect will be shown to the House of Commons, and that these disgraceful proceedings will immediately close. I must call on the hon. and gallant Gentleman to withdraw the expression he made use of, that the hon. Member for West Belfast was present when a President was elected of a murder society. That is the expression which I understand the hon. member for West Belfast to complain of, and I do hope that the hon. and gallant Gentleman will at once withdraw it.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: What must I withdraw?

MR. SEXTON: The charge of the hon. and gallant Gentleman was, Sir, that a President of a murder society was elected and that I was present. I say that he is an infernal liar.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. and gallant Member must withdraw that expression.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: I stated that a certain person was elected President.

MR. SPEAKER: I must again call upon the hon. and gallant Member to withdraw the expression.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Certainly, Sir. In obedience to your ruling, I withdraw any expression you think I ought not to have used.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I rise to Order, Sir. The hon. Member for West Belfast has not withdrawn the expression he used.

MR. SEXTON remained seated.

MR. SPEAKER said: I am sure the hon. Member will regret the expression and withdraw it, now that the provocative expression has been withdrawn. I trust that he will withdraw and allow the matter to end.

MR. SEXTON: Then I withdraw it, Sir, at your request.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I rise, Sir, to a point of Order. I wish to ask whether it is competent to say of any association that it is a murderous association, and to imply in so doing that an hon. Member of this House is either directly or indirectly connected with such an association? Is it right to say of any foreign association that it is a murderous association? May I venture to add that in connection with this statement I have been singled out by a Catholic newspaper in New York as a worthy object for assassination.

An hon. MEMBER: You would not be worth shooting.

Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The question raised by the hon. Member is not a point of Order. An assertion that a foreign society is a murderous society is not a question of Order which arises now.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON, resuming: I come now to another point—to another link in the chain by which I desire to connect particular individuals who stand branded with the crime of murder—to a circumstance which occurred in America in reference to Mr. Patrick Egan. I am very loath to make these statements; but I think it is absolutely imperative that the eyes of this House and of this country should be opened to these things; and whatever it may cost me, as long as I have breath, I shall brand this League as it deserves. Mr. Patrick Egan assisted at a supper in America; this supper was held to celebrate a day which is now observed in that part of the world—the 6th of May—on which day the fiendish murders were committed in Phœnix Park. Although some hon. and right hon. Gentlemen may have forgotten those murders, the blood of the victims still cries for vengeance. Although the perpetrators of the murders are now in their graves, yet those who hounded them on have still to receive justice, and I believe they ultimately will receive it. This Patrick Egan sat down at a supper with John Walsh, A. E. Ford, W. E. Ford, B. Roe, and T. Macarty. I have taken this statement from *The Irish World* of May the 24th, 1884. The object of the supper party was to present a purse to the woman who was supposed to have supplied the knives by which the Phœnix Park murders were committed. I wonder that hon. Members who went to America after that did not wash their hands of Patrick Egan. A supper to celebrate such a deed as this should have been sufficient to brand with eternal infamy all who partook of it? But what do I find? Afterwards, in 1886—last year—it was decided to present this Mr. Patrick Egan with a service of plate. The man who had thus celebrated the Phœnix Park murders was presented with a service of plate. Who were those who subscribed to it? *The Irish World* gave the names of those who subscribed to this service of plate as Charles Stewart Parnell, Justin

M'Carthy, Thomas Sexton, Edward Dawson, John Dillon, Dwyer Gray, and William O'Brien. The subscribers presented Mr. Egan with this service of plate as a tribute to his many virtues. Surely I am entitled to say that those who presented this tribute to the man who celebrated the Phœnix Park murders could not help associating themselves, more or less, with his misdeeds. All this ought to have been perfectly known to hon. Gentlemen opposite, for it was recorded in full in their own paper in America.

Mr. SEXTON: I never heard of the supper until this moment; never.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I come now to the end of the chain. Mr. Davitt, the other day, just before he left America, made a speech in which he alluded to the Bill which the Government have now produced. He does not approve of the Bill; and he informs us candidly, fairly, and openly, as the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) has done, what he intends to do when it is passed. And this is what he said—

> "If coercion be attempted, thousands of men will be called upon and compelled by their manhood, their consciences, and their pledges to the sacred cause of Irish liberty, to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, to show the world, by one supreme act of desperation, that, mighty as England's power may be, there are means by which justice can be vindicated and cherished rights asserted even against a culprit so great as the Government of the British Empire."

There was cheering at this point of his speech which lasted fully four minutes, and *United Ireland* says that "the scene beggared description." The last time I saw Mr. Davitt was at a meeting at Hyde Park. I formed part of the audience addressed by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), with whose speech I do not find any fault; but I want to point out that Mr. Davitt, who made this savage speech in America, has come over here and is now one of the principal supporters of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). I do not know what Englishmen think of that; but I believe the constituencies will have their eyes opened by it, and by scenes which have sometimes occurred in this House. I arraign the National League, as far as my weak voice is able, before the Bar of this House, and before public opinion in England, as a criminal organization which has been founded on bloodshed and murder, as I have shown, and which derives the main part of its supplies from the notoriously avowed enemies of the British Empire—and I shall prove every word I have said. I am perfectly well aware that this has been denied. The hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin (Mr. T. Harrington) the other night stated that since the establishment of the National League it had not got, and had not used, £4,000 of American money. Now, Sir, there never was made in the history of this House a more utterly fallacious statement than that. I deliberately assert this because the hon. Member is Secretary to the National League, and in the month of January this year he attended a meeting of the League in Dublin in that capacity, and I find it recorded in that excellent newspaper *United Ireland* that—"On the motion of Mr. T. Harrington, Mr. Arthur O'Connor was unanimously voted to the chair; that the secretary read a report to the effect that on the previous night, at a meeting of the committee, Mr. Healy in the chair, and the minutes having been read, the treasurer reported that the receipts since last meeting from Irish sources were £333 17*s.* 1*d.*, and from the Irish National League in America £5,000." I regret that the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin is not in the House, because I cannot conceive how this discrepancy arises.

Mr. SEXTON: You are misrepresenting his statement. That is the explanation—[*Cries of* "Order!"]

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I have read the report in *The Times*, and the report of the proceedings in *United Ireland;* and in one case the hon. Member states that the National League had not got, and had not used, £4,000 of American money; and in the other case the report is that at the meeting at Dublin the treasurer stated that £5,000 of American money had been received in the previous fortnight.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): There were two funds, one for political purposes and the other on account of evictions. Most of the money received was for the latter, and my brother was referring to the League. I am sure the hon. and gallant Member would not wilfully misrepresent the statement.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: It is impossible for me to say how this money is spent. I only judge from the newspapers, and from the newspapers of the National League especially. When I see it stated that they have not received £4,000 from America—[An hon. Member: It was never stated.] The report in *The Times* is that, "Mr. Harrington stated that the National League had not got or used £4,000 of this money."

Mr. E. HARRINGTON: The words "for this purpose" are left out. He was referring to the Parliamentary purposes under discussion at the time.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: It is perfectly indifferent to me how the money is allocated. These statements are made, and upon them I form my opinion. I find, at a meeting held at New York on the 7th of December, 1886, a motion was brought forward to give a banquet to Mr. Davitt; and a Mr. Jeremiah Murphy delivered himself thus—

> "The men who live on banquets are the Irish Members of Parliament, who are squandering on themselves the hard-earned money which we collect and send to them."

I do not say this is true, but it is stated of them. What I am anxious to impress on the House and the country is, that the greater portion of the money which enables hon. Members who sit below the Gangway opposite to become and to remain Members of this House comes from the avowed foes of the British Empire in America—foes who hate England with a worse and more deadly hatred than ever the Russians did; and that in order to place them in the position which they occupy the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has adopted a foreign policy. Hon. Members opposite will find it a difficult thing to cut themselves clear of Patrick Ford, who is identified with murder and assassination, and who—I defy them to contradict it—collects money for them. The hon. Member for Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) and the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) have, in this House, tried to disclaim all connection with Ford. They were at once answered by Mr. Davitt, who immediately afterwards wrote a letter to *The Freeman's Journal*, in which he said that the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Longford might lead to the forming of erroneous opinions in Ireland as to the part which *The Irish World* had played in the movement of the last seven years. It is not correct to say that for years and years *The Irish World* has never ceased to attack us, because it has been our most persistent enemy. Davitt went on to say that Ford, abandoning the dynamite policy, had largely assisted the League, and that he believed that three-fourths of the enormous sum received by the Land League from America was subscribed through the appeals made by Patrick Ford in his paper; and through the instrumentality of hundreds of auxiliary branches of the League which were organized by *The Irish World*. But has Ford, who sends over thousands of pounds to the League, given up dynamite? Not at all. Since the letter of Davitt, and since the speech delivered in this House by the hon. and learned Member for Longford, Patrick Ford has written an article on dynamite, in which he says that dynamite was never intended to be employed in a war for anarchical purposes, but that this was a war between two nations, one of which had plundered and ruined the other for centuries, and the other was waging a war of extermination. This is the man who sends over money to destroy the Empire, if possible, by murder, by outrage and dynamite. To my mind, the most serious part of the question is this—We, the Irish Loyalists, have gone through dangers for England in difficult times. We confronted her foes in 1641. We confronted them in 1689 and in 1798, and, although they were critical times, we had not British statesmen against us then. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has many foes in this country; but I do not believe his worst enemies could have wished a more bitter ending of his great career than that he should be dragged at the wheels of the blood-stained chariot of the National League while consenting to sacrifice the best interests of his country, which it was his bounden duty to uphold, to maintain, and never to betray. I do not believe that the country will ratify the policy which the right hon. Gentleman proposes as an alternative to that of Her Majesty's Government; and I have no doubt whatever that, when the country is appealed to, the answer to our appeal will be the same as it was at the last Election—that Ireland shall never be handed over to the blood-stained authority of the National League, but ever remain an integral portion of the British Empire.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Motion *agreed to.*

Debate *further adjourned* till *Monday* next.

MOTIONS.

—o—

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (HIGHWAYS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board, under "The Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act, 1878," relating to the North Riding of the County of York, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 224.]

TRUSTS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1867) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Bill to amend "The Trusts (Scotland) Act, 1867," *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland and The Lord Advocate.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 225.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before One o'clock, till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 18*th April,* 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) * (63); Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) * (64).

Second Reading—Isle of Man (Customs) * (56).

Committee—Report—Army (Annual) * (55).

Third Reading—Sheriffs (Consolidation) * (50), and *passed.*

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL — *First Reading* — Metropolitan Police * (65).

LAW AND POLICE—THE LATE DOG REGULATIONS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN, in rising to ask the Government, Why the Commissioner of Police has withdrawn the order which was in force last year, requiring dogs in the streets of the Metropolis to be either led or muzzled; and whether it is considered that there is less danger of hydrophobia now than when the order was in force; and, if so, why? said, That, according to the opinion of an eminent veterinary authority, hydrophobia would be exterminated if all dogs were kept for a sufficiently long time under proper control. In connection with the subject, he saw that a recent Metropolitan Police Return shewed that 1,245 stray dogs were taken to the Dogs' Home in the month of March, and that two dogs were destroyed which were undoubtedly suffering from rabies. The importance of the Regulations which had been relaxed was shown by the fact that last month there were no less than 65 persons bitten by dogs in London. The noble Earl concluded by asking the Question of which he had given notice.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK), in reply, said, he did not in the least underrate the disease to which the noble Earl had referred, as it was one of the greatest scourges which could afflict human beings or animals; but the course taken in this matter was this—The Metropolitan powers—which were still retained by the police with regard to ferocious and dangerous dogs, with a view to the extinction of rabies—had been transferred to the Privy Council, which had control over the question of contagious diseases in animals. Under that body, the Local Authorities throughout the whole of the country had been communicated with, and requested to make inquiries as to this disease, and were authorized to make stringent rules, if the police considered them necessary, for dealing with it; and in a great number of districts in the country very stringent rules had been laid down. He was asked if the Government had reason to think that the danger of hydrophobia was less now. They had very good reason for believing it to be so, as the Returns this year shewed that there had only been two cases of rabies—one on January 29, and the other on February 5. This was a very different state of things to that which was existing last year. The Metropolitan Board of Works was now the Local Authority, and it had full power to make such regulations as might be required to restrict the freedom of dogs in the streets, with a view to lessening the danger to which the noble Earl referred.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN said, that the Commissioner of Police still retained the power, under Statute, to order that dogs should be muzzled in the Metropolitan area. If there should be one single case of death from hydrophobia in London, now that the order to which his Question referred had been withdrawn, a very serious responsibility indeed would rest upon the Commissioners of Police.

House adjourned at Five o'clock,
till To-morrow, a quarter
past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 18*th April*, 1887.

MINUTES.] — New Writ Issued — *For* Taunton, *v.* The honble. Samuel Charles Allsopp, now Baron Hindlip, called up to the House of Peers.

Public Bills — *Ordered — First Reading* — Duke of Connaught's Leave * [228]; Habitual Drunkards Act (1879) Amendment * [229].

First Reading — Incumbents of Benefices Loans Extension Act (1886) Amendment * [230].

Second Reading — Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) [217] [*Seventh Night*]; Justices' Jurisdiction [201].

Select Committee — Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2) * [166]; Colonel Hughes and Mr. Octavius Morgan *nominated* Members.

Provisional Order Bills — *Ordered — First Reading* — Local Government (Poor Law) * [226]; Local Government (Poor Law) (No. 2) * [227].

QUESTIONS.

ADMIRALTY — THE MEDITERRANEAN SQUADRON—ETIQUETTE OF SALUTING.

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Under what authority, and for what purpose, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, a few days ago, took the main portion of the Mediterranean Squadron to Cannes; whether it is correct that he omitted to salute the French Squadron on its arrival, and the reason for this alleged want of naval courtesy; if it is the fact that about 2,000 men were allowed to land, whereby many of them were injured through collision with some of the residents; and, if he will have the Mediterranean and Channel Squadrons brought together, either at Gibraltar or some other place, for the purpose of manœuvring both Fleets in tactics such as would devolve upon them in a time of war?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): A portion of the Mediterranean Squadron was ordered to Cannes, under the authority of the Board of Admiralty, in consequence of the Queen's visit to that place. By the instructions contained in the Queen's Regulations, turret-ships, and those that carry less than 10 broadside guns, are relieved from the necessity of saluting, unless they have been specially supplied with light guns for the purpose. The ships at Cannes had less guns than the number specified. The Admiral commanding the French Squadron, and the Local Authorities of the town of Cannes, are quite satisfied that no discourtesy was intended by the non-return of the salute. It is right to add that the *Alexandra*, the flag-ship of the Duke of Edinburgh, being under repair, the Duke had to transfer his flag to another ship, unprovided with saluting guns. It was in consequence of the lack of these guns, and not from any want of respect to the French flag, that the salute was not returned. As to the Question with respect to 2,000 men being allowed to land, it is quite clear that, as the total complement of the Squadron is under 1,700 men, and as only a very small proportion of them could be allowed on shore at the same time, the sources from which the hon. Gentleman has derived his information are not very reliable. Under the present system, all Naval Squadrons abroad are constantly engaged in tactics such as would devolve upon them in time of war.

ISLANDS OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC—RECENT DISTURBANCES IN TONGA.

Mr. ATKINSON (Boston) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether he has received any further information from Tonga?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES) (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead) (who replied) said: On Friday last I received the following telegram from Sir Charles Mitchell:—

> "Arrived at Tonga, March 27. King afforded every facility for inquiry being made. Will probably last for three weeks. All quiet. British interests, so far as can be learnt, were not affected by recent events."

Further despatches have been received

since my answer to a Question on this subject on March 1; but they do not add materially to our information, and they are all of earlier date than the departure of Sir Charles Mitchell for Tonga.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—CONSTABLE GOLDEN—REFUSAL TO ACT.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether Constable Golden, at a recent eviction at Coolatore, County Westmeath, when directed by District Inspector Mullener to break a window, for the purpose of enabling the evicting party to enter the house, replied—

> "That he had a great objection to do it, or to act as a bailiff, while three bailiffs were looking on."

His officer then said—

> "I shall only have to order you to do so."

Golden replied—

> "If I do so it will be illegal. I have been on eviction duty for the last 12 years, and have never been asked to do anything of the sort, nor will I do it now;"

whether Constable Golden had to go before his officer, on his return to Moate, to answer for his refusal to act as a bailiff's assistant; whether Constable Golden has tendered his resignation, or has he been compelled to do so; and, whether it is part of a policeman's duty in Ireland to act as a bailiff at an eviction?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The constable did not use the words attributed to him in this Question when selected as one of the men to force an entrance by climbing; he said he would rather not; but, on being ordered, he at once proceeded. He had not to go before his officer in connection with this. He has recently voluntarily tendered his resignation; but not through any disagreement with the Authorities.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask the right hon. and gallant Member, whether the Government hold that it is the duty of a constable to break windows at an eviction?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I should say that the Government hold it is the duty of the police to obey the orders of an officer.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN: I wish to point out that the right hon. and gallant Member has not answered the third paragraph of the Question.

[No reply.]

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE'S ESTATES, QUEEN'S COUNTY.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state the number of persons who have been evicted on the estates of the Marquess of Lansdowne in Queen's County since 1st March, 1887; and, the total extra cost of the Constabulary employed in connection with such evictions?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that there were two tenants evicted, which also necessitated the eviction of 16 subtenants with their families, or in all 100 persons. The extra cost of the Constabulary employed was £413.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND)—PAYMENT OF RESULTS FEES.

Mr. TUITE (Westmeath, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the cause of the delay in forwarding the results fees to those National School Teachers in Ireland whose schools were examined in January last; and, whether the fees have always been paid within the month which follows the month in which the examination is held?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that there are five cases only remaining unpaid, and that this is due to irregularities in the Returns requiring investigation. The rule for the payment of these fees is as indicated; but when the Returns are irregular a delay necessarily arises.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MR. T.N. CULLEN, DIVISIONAL MAGISTRATE OF BELFAST.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he is aware that the following document was published in the neighbourhood of Castleblayney:—

> "A reward of £10 is offered by the Rev. Mathew Macaulay, M'Kelvey's Grove, for such information as shall lead to the conviction of the party or parties who entered and desecrated M'Kelvey's Grove Meeting House on the night of the 10th of July last. Also, a reward of £5 is offered for such information as shall lead to the conviction of the leaders of an Orange Drumming Party, who, on the evening of the 1st of July last, waylaid and assaulted the Rev. Mathew Macaulay and his wife on the Queen's highway."
>
> "The information to be given to the Head Constable of Police, Castleblayney;"

and, whether Mr. T. N. Cullen, Divisional Magistrate of Belfast, refused to allow the above placard to be posted on the notice boards of any of the police barracks in Castleblayney or its neighbourhood; and, if so, upon what grounds did he so refuse?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Yes, Sir; the notice in question was, I understand, published at Castleblayney, which was not posted on the barrack notice boards, the Divisional Magistrate having been informed by the local police that doing so would excite the people of the district. In this view both the County and District Inspectors concurred.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: Is it usual for the police to refuse to post notices for the detection of crime, because it may be alleged that it would excite bad feeling in the locality?

COLONEL KING-HARMAN: The posting of the notices on the boards outside the police barracks is a matter entirely in the discretion of the Divisional Magistrate.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: Will instructions now be given to post the notices?

[No reply.]

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—GOOD AND RELIABLE WEAPONS.

GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether the arms of the various branches of the Military Service are satisfactory; and, if not, whether any, and what, steps have been taken to insure that Soldiers, Militiamen, and Volunteers should have good and reliable weapons?

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman had any official information as to certain experiments made on Easter Monday on the sword-bayonets of the City of London Artillery Volunteers; whether it was the fact that on being tested against a dummy consisting of a bundle of cotton waste the weapons bent up into the shape of bill-hooks, and remained in that position until bent back by the pressure of the foot; and, whether it was the fact, as stated by the Military Correspondent of *The Times* from Dover, that out of 50 intrenching tools, 32 were broken in three days?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I should not be acting fairly if, after a few weeks' experience of the War Office, I gave a positive assurance in the terms asked for by my hon. and gallant Friend. He is aware, from what I have already stated, that steps are being taken to provide our Army with a better rifle than the Martini-Henry, though that is in itself a very efficient weapon. The Irish Militia are still armed with Snider rifles, which will be exchanged as soon as the store will permit. The swords for the Cavalry have all passed the test laid down in 1885 by Sir D. C. Drury-Lowe's Committee. The present Director of Artillery and Stores, who is one of the most able and efficient of our public servants, has taken thoroughly in hand the re-testing of all bayonets supplied to the troops. All those in the hands of the Regular Infantry have been re-tested. Those held by the Artillery are now being re-tested. The re-testing of the Militia bayonets is about to be commenced; those of the Volunteers will be exchanged as soon as sufficient bayonets for the purpose are released from the Regular Forces. Orders have also been given for exchanging the swords which the Yeomanry now have for weapons which have been re-tested. In answer to the other Question, I have to say that, as regards the bayonets supplied to the City of London Artillery Volunteers, we have called for a Report; but it has not yet been received. As to the other matters described by *The Times* Correspondent, the statements in the articles are somewhat indefinite and a little difficult to trace; but on that subject also a Report has been called for. I am much obliged to the hon. Member for putting the Question, and I shall put the Reports in his hands in order that he may see what they are.

POST OFFICE—SERVICE TO CHINA AND JAPAN BY CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

Captain COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.,) asked the Postmaster General, Whether the detailed proposals for the service to China and Japan offered by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company were laid before the Chamber of Commerce of Hong Kong; and, if so, by whom, and on what date; and, whether such proposals were also laid before the Chambers of Commerce of London and Manchester; and, if so, by whom, and on what date?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The whole of the tenders and the correspondence relating to them were sent from the Colonial Office to the Governor of Hong Kong, and by him submitted to the Chamber of Commerce for consideration. The Chamber reported their opinion to the Colonial Government on the 24th of June, 1886, to the effect that the proposed Canadian route would be practically useless. On the second point my answer is in the negative. It is not customary to lay tenders for Postal Services before Chambers of Commerce in this country, and it was not done in this case.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND)—PAYMENT OF RESULTS FEES —ROUNDSTONE.

Mr. FOLEY (Galway, Connemara) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What is the cause of the delay in paying the results fees accruing to the schools of the parish of Roundstone, the examination of these schools having taken place during the first fortnight of February last; and, whether it is customary for all results fees to be paid within the month following the month in which the examination is held?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that the results fees have been paid in all the schools of the parish of Roundstone. The rule for these payments is as stated. A delay, however, sometimes arises, as explained in my reply to the Question just put by the hon. Member for North Westmeath (Mr. Tuite).

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) ACT—DUNDALK UNION.

Mr. NOLAN (Louth, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true that the local inquiry into schemes for the erection of labourers' cottages in Dundalk Union, asked for in August of last year, was not held by the Local Government Board until January of the present year; that the Report of the Inspector who held this inquiry was sent to the Local Government Board some time in February last; that a copy of said Report was sent to the Dundalk Board of Guardians on 16th February; that the Provisional Order for proceeding with the erection of the cottages has not yet been issued by the Local Government Board; and, if so, how is this extraordinary delay accounted for; when will the required order be issued; and, if he is aware that, in the meantime, the poor labourers are forced to live in insanitary houses, many of which are not weather-proof, and so limited in accommodation that in some cases from seven to 10 persons of both sexes and all ages are forced to sleep in the same apartment?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Any delay which may have occurred in the proceedings was on the part of the Local Authority. The Local Government Board have, however, now issued the necessary Order. I understand that some of the existing houses are in a very defective and overcrowded condition.

GENERAL PRISONS BOARD FOR IRELAND—SALE OF CONVICT FARM, LUSK, CO. DUBLIN.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the convict farm at Lusk, County Dublin, has been advertised to be sold by the General Prisons Board for Ireland; and, whether this farm was, about 40 years ago, a common, to which the inhabitants of Rush and Lusk had rights, and was appropriated by the Government without any adequate notice or compensation to those inhabitants; and, if so, whether the Government will now take into consideration the justice and expediency of putting up the land in lots to suit small purchasers, and confining the bidding to the people of Rush and Lusk, thus acting on the policy of creating a peasant proprietary?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The convict farm has been advertised for sale. The Government acquired this property by a special Act of Parliament (1856) (19 & 20 *Vict.* c. 24), provision being made for the satisfaction of all recognized claims and interests.

Mr. CLANCY: The right hon. and gallant Gentleman has not answered the Question at all. He has not answered whether the Government will now take into consideration the justice and expediency of putting up the lands in lots to suit small purchasers and confining the bidding to the people of Rush and Lusk?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he believed the Government had no such intention.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—MESSRS. WARREN ST. LEGER WOODS AND JAMES HAMILTON WOODS.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, in the case of the appointment of two brothers as Justices of the Peace in Ireland, the later appointed is required to give an undertaking that he will not perform any Magisterial functions at the same time, in the same Court, with the earlier appointed; whether Warren St. Leger Woods, Justice of the Peace for the County of Dublin, was required to give such an undertaking on his appointment about five years ago; if so, whether Warren St. Leger Woods has, nevertheless, violated that undertaking by habitually sitting with his brother, James Hamilton Woods, at the Balbriggan Road Sessions; and, if he has done so, whether the Government propose to take any, and what, notice of his conduct?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The extent of the undertaking referred to appears to be discretionary with the Lord Chancellor for the time being. The undertaking given by the gentleman named was confined to Petty Sessions. He was not required to give any with respect to Road Sessions.

Mr. CLANCY asked, was he to understand that the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Lieutenant required such an undertaking from some magistrates and not from others?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, that was not what he intended to convey. The Lord Lieutenant had nothing to do with the matter. It entirely rested with the Lord Chancellor to require an undertaking from members of the same family or gentlemen living in the same house, or landlords and their agents appointed as magistrates for the same district, not to sit on the same Bench; but that applied only to Petty Sessions, and not to Road Sessions.

Mr. CLANCY asked, was it the practice of Lord Chancellors in Ireland to get such an undertaking from some magistrates and not from others; and also, whether this Warren St. Leger Woods had also sat at Petty Sessions with his brother?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he understood that Mr. Woods had not sat at Petty Sessions in connection with his brother. He believed that, as a rule, the Lord Chancellor required an undertaking that gentlemen such as he had mentioned should not sit together at Petty Sessions.

Mr. CLANCY asked, was the right hon. and gallant Member aware this was an important matter connected with the administration of justice in Ireland —that several years ago Lord Naas, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, issued a Minute that no magistrate should sit on the Bench with his brother?

Colonel KING-HARMAN replied, he was not aware that any Chief Secretary had issued a Minute controlling the Lord Chancellor in the matter.

Mr. CLANCY asked, would the right hon. and gallant Member inquire into the existence of the Minute?

[No reply.]

RAILWAYS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—SUBWAY AT TODMORDEN STATION — LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the attention of the Board of Trade has been drawn to the absence of subways or bridges at Todmorden Station, the principal junction of the East Lancashire section with the main line of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway; whether the Board of Trade have, at any time, made any recommendations to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company to remove this serious source of danger to the multitude of passengers who are now compelled to cross the lines on the level; and, if so, what replies have been made by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company to any such recommendations; and, whether it is in the power of the Board of Trade to take any steps to induce the Railway Company to provide subways or bridges at Todmorden Station for the safety of the public?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The attention of the Board of Trade has been very recently drawn to the absence of subways or bridges at the Todmorden Station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway by the Todmorden Local Board, who inquired whether it was intended to deal with questions of this nature by the Railway Bill now in the House of Lords. The Board of Trade possess no power to require the Company to provide subways or bridges at Todmorden Station. But they are informed by the Company that they have in contemplation a general scheme of improvements at the station.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—LOANS TO FISHERMEN OF CROFTING PARISHES.

Mr. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland) asked the Lord Advocate, Who is responsible for the Regulations under which loans are made by the Fishery Board to fishermen in crofting parishes in Scotland; whether he is aware that, according to these Regulations, only three-fourths of the sum necessary to purchase or build a boat is advanced; that securities over and above the personal security of the applicant and a mortgage upon the boat itself are demanded; and, whether he has any information to show that these Regulations make this provision of the Crofters' Act practically unavailable; and, if so, whether the Government will consider the advisability of so amending these Regulations as to enable the whole price of the boat to be advanced upon the personal security of the applicant and a mortgage upon the boat itself?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The Regulations referred to were confirmed by the Secretary for Scotland, with the sanction of the Treasury, and the loans are made by the Fishery Board upon such terms as to repayment, security, rate, and payment of interest, and otherwise as the Secretary for Scotland, with the consent of the Treasury, shall determine. The statements in the second paragraph are correct. I am not aware that the Regulations make the provision of the Crofters' Act practically unavailable. The advance authorized is a very large one; and I cannot hold out any hope that the whole price of boats will be advanced on the security set forth in the Question.

WAR OFFICE—BREVET MAJORITIES TO CAPTAINS OF INFANTRY REGIMENTS.

Sir HENRY FLETCHER (Sussex, Lewes) asked the Secretary of State for War, If he would take into consideration the case of captains of Infantry Regiments who have completed 20 years' full-pay service, by giving them Brevet Majorities in order to prevent their being superseded by officers of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): It is impossible to maintain an exact equality of promotion in the different arms of the Service; and if this brevet were conceded it would not prevent the supersession of officers of long service by captains of less than 20 years' service in other arms. I may add that there do not appear at present to be more than five captains of Cavalry or Infantry who have completed 20 years' service.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE—FREE GOODS TO WORKHOUSES.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether, owing to the poverty of tenant farmers in Great Britain and Ireland, arising out of high rents, he will see his way to recommend that all goods upon which duty is chargeable be in future given free to all workhouses?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I cannot hold out any hope that effect will be given to the suggestion.

THE ENGLISH AND IRISH CONSTABULARY—ANNUAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Mr. O'HANLON (Cavan, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether Irish police are entitled to one month's leave in each year; and, whether he will recommend that the same privilege be accorded to the English constables?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I am not aware of the amount of leave the Irish police receive; and I have already announced I do not intend to make any recommendation to have the leave of absence of English constables extended.

Mr. O'HANLON: Did the right hon. and learned Gentleman take the trouble to inquire what is the law regulating Irish constables and English constables in the matter?

[No reply.]

MERCHANT SHIPPING—LOSS OF THE "VICTORIA" IN CROSSING THE CHANNEL.

Mr. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the statement of the Captain of the Channel Steamer *Victoria*, which was wrecked upon the rocks near Cape d'Ailly, on the North Coast of France, on Wednesday last, was attributable to the non-sounding of the fog horn at the Cape is founded on fact, so far as the non-sounding of the fog horn is concerned; and, whether any International agreement exists between this country and France whereby it is rendered obligatory on the part of the Maritime Authorities of the two countries to warn passing vessels of danger during the prevalence of fog at sea?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): An official inquiry has—as I stated in the House on Thursday last—been ordered by the Board of Trade to be held in the Wreck Commissioner's Court into the circumstances attending this unfortunate casualty; and it would be unusual to attempt to anticipate the Report of that Inquiry. There will also, I should presume, be an inquiry in France to ascertain all particulars respecting the starting of the fog signal at Cape d'Ailly on the morning of the 13th instant. I am not aware of any formal agreement of the description alluded to by the hon. Member; but I believe it is admitted by all seafaring men that, as a general rule, the Aids to Navigation in both France and England are maintained in efficiency.

COLONY OF VICTORIA—SALE OF EFFECTS OF A DECEASED PASSENGER.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether his attention has been drawn to the case of a passenger who died on board the *Melbourne*, bound for Melbourne, in October, 1886, in which the curator of the estates of deceased persons for the Colony of Victoria sold the effects of the deceased passenger before communicating with his relations; and, whether such action of the curator is in accordance with the Colonial Law; and, if so, whether he will communicate with the officials of the Colony as to the desirability of restraining for the future the curator from selling the property of passengers dying *en route*, until he has endeavoured to ascertain the wishes of their relations on the subject?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): I have not heard of the case referred to by the hon. Member; but I will cause inquiry to be made about the facts and communicate with him. I understand that the law, shortly stated, is as follows:—The money, goods, and effects of any deceased passenger, to which no claim is made within seven days after the arrival of the ship, are handed over to the curator. His practice is to hold over all jewelry and objects which may appear to have any special interest for the next-of-kin, and to sell the rest at periodical sales held for that purpose. The proceeds are dealt with by the curator as administrator, and distributed to next-of-kin through the office. This law seems reasonable; and, as at present advised, I am not prepared to make any communication as suggested by the hon. Member.

ARMY—INSANITARY STATE OF DOVER BARRACKS.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any further information has reached him as to the sanitary condition of the barracks at Dover, contradictory of the statement contained in the Report of the Principal Medical Officer there and the Commanding Officer of the Royal Engineers, quoted by him on 8th February last, "that they had failed to discover any insanitary conditions;" whether the death of another young officer, Mr. Keegan, and the illness of a private soldier, are attributable to typhoid fever, contracted in the barracks; and, if so, whether he will cause immediate and searching inquiry to be made into all the facts of these cases, which follow so closely on the death of Lieutenant Jarrett, of the Buffs, from the same disease; and, if he will state whether complaints have reached him as to the insanitary condition of other barracks.

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): According to a report received this morning, careful investigation has failed to discover in Fort Burgoyne, where these cases of enteric fever unfortunately occurred, any insanitary conditions which will account for the disease; but a further minute inspection shall be made, and steps taken to remove immediately every possible source of disease to which any suspicion can attach. In answer to the third Question, we have received complaints from other barracks also; and we shall in every case, if the complaint appears to be well-founded, remedy it with the least possible delay.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—NEWRY PETTY SESSIONS—CONVICTION OF WILLIAM DURNAN, A PERSON OF UNSOUND MIND.

Mr. JUSTIN HUNTLY M'CARTHY (Newry) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he was aware of the circumstances under which William Durnan was, on the 27th October last, convicted at Newry Petty Sessions, and sentenced to eight months' imprisonment, he being at the time of unsound mind; and whether the said William Durnan has been examined by the medical officer of the gaol; or, if not, whether he will be so examined and properly treated?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: This man was convicted and sentenced as stated; but the magistrates do not appear to have had any reason to suppose that he was of unsound mind. He was seen in the usual course by the medical officer of the prison, and passed by him. He has recently been removed to an asylum.

ADMIRALTY—RESIGNATION OF COMMISSIONS IN THE NAVY.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is now to be understood that anyone accepting a Commission in the Navy cannot ever, under existing laws as recently interpreted, claim his release as a matter of right; and, if so, whether those who serve without a definite engagement, and without a Commission, are equally assumed to have permanently abandoned their right of re-entering civil life?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): The principle which has always guided the Admiralty in considering the request from an officer to resign his Commission is, that the exigencies of the Public Service must be considered before the personal convenience of any individual officer. Subject to this one consideration, there is no wish on the part of the Admiralty to retain officers in the Service against their will. I do not understand the exact meaning of the latter half of the Question. With the exception of midshipmen and naval cadets, and clerks and assistant clerks, who are classed as subordinate officers, and of warrant officers, all officers in Her Majesty's Service hold Commissions. In the very few instances that have occurred of a subordinate officer wishing to withdraw from the Service the Admiralty have not withheld their consent, when it has been ascertained that the reasons advanced are good, and that the assent of parents or guardians has been obtained.

EGYPT — SIR HENRY DRUMMOND WOLFF'S MISSION — NEUTRALIZATION OF EGYPT AND THE SUEZ CANAL.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether it is correct that Her Majesty's Government have submitted proposals to the Porte and the European Powers, through the agency of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, for the neutralization of Egypt and the Suez Canal; if so, will he be good enough to inform the House the general tenour of the proposals, and what prospect there is, if any, of their being approved and ratified?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.) (who replied) said: The Question of the hon. Member is but a repetition of one which I answered on the 5th of this month, and I am unable to give him any other reply. In the debate upon the Vote for the expenses of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission, I reminded the Committee of the purposes of his Mission, and of the subjects of his inquiries in Egypt, with a view to the framing of an ulterior Convention in regard to that country. Her Majesty's Government are as desirous as hon. Members that the Mission should not be prolonged; nothing is neglected to bring to a conclusion the important negotiations in which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff is engaged; but to hurry them unduly, or to make public the precise terms, or even the general tenour, of his proposals, would not conduce to results which would be satisfactory to the House, or beneficial to the objects which we have in view. I may add that I hope that the collection of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Reports, which I promised to lay upon the Table, will be ready for delivery to hon. Members in two or three days.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked, when the Papers with regard to these negotiations would be laid on the Table?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that at present the negotiations were going on, and it was impossible to say when they would come to a conclusion. They had been going on in a hopeful manner.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVATE BILL LEGISLATION.

MR. CRAIG-SELLAR (Lanarkshire, Partick) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether the Government adhere to their intention of introducing a Bill to improve and cheapen the process of Private Bill Legislation; if so, whether they will consent to the appointment of a Select Committee to which that Bill, and a Bill on the same subject which stands for Second Reading on 20th April, shall be referred; and, if not, whether they will consent to the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the best means of carrying out the recommendation of the Procedure Committee of last Session, to the effect that—

> "Arrangements should be made to relieve the House from the duties now discharged by Private Bill Committees?"

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): The Government, I am happy to say, are quite agreed with the hon. Gentleman in the object he has in view, and it is their intention to introduce a Bill in the House of Lords dealing with the question. But they do not object to the Bill of the hon. Member being read a second time on the 20th instant; and if it is read a second time they would propose that it be referred to a Select Committee, in order that progress may be made with their measure, which they regard as of the first value and great importance.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ALLEGED ASSAULTS ON THREE GIRLS AT CULLEN, NEAR MILLSTREET.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a Question of which I have given him private Notice. It refers to a matter which was the subject of a Question some days ago in the House. An outrage was reported upon three girls, and it was said that they had been beaten with furze upon the legs. I wish to ask the Government, Have their inquiries given them information corresponding to this which I shall read?

> "We emphatically state that there is no truth in the statement which appeared in *The Cork Constitution* of Monday, April 11, relative to a supposed outrage which took place on the public road at Cullen on April 3. It is false that our hats were taken off and kicked about the roads; it is also false that our clothes were taken up and we were beaten with furze on the legs, or that we called for help, and when returning home by the same route that we were not in the least molested."
>
> Signed,
> Honoria Hickey.
> Albinia O'Sullivan.
> Elly Hickey.
> Witness,
> John Riordan.
> P. O'Sullivan."

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY for IRELAND (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The Question of the hon. Gentleman was put into my hands only a few minutes ago, as I came into the House. I have not seen the statement signed by the three girls; but I am extremely glad to hear that they have made so satisfactory a statement. As far as I have been able to ascertain officially, the report of the alleged outrage was certainly greatly exaggerated; and if any assault was committed on the girls it was by no means so aggravated as reported.

SIR BERNHARD SAMUELSON AND THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury): Sir, I rise to put a Question to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of which I have given him private Notice. It relates to his speech at Edinburgh, a speech in which the right hon. Gentleman makes a reference to my hon. Friend the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir Joseph Pease) and myself. The statement to which I refer was, in substance, that my hon. Friend and myself had been "put up" to move the Amendment to the Second Reading of the Coercion Bill. The words, if correctly reported, are given in *The Observer* of yesterday as follows:—

> "It is true that two very respectable co-partners were brought up to the scratch to move and second the Amendment on the present Coercion Bill."

And then the right hon. Gentleman goes on to say—

> "But, as a rule, the steadier Gladstonians sit in a kind of silent resignation while the battle is being fought by their wilder friends."

The Question I wish to ask my right hon. Friend is this—What is his authority for making that statement? I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that it is entirely unfounded; that my action in regard to this Bill and my Amendment to the Second Reading were entirely spontaneous; and that, with regard to my hon. Friend the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham, he communicated with me immediately on hearing of the Notice which I had given, asking whether it would be quite agreeable to me that he should second the Amendment. I say nothing of the animus of the statement — [*Cries of* "Order!"]—and I content myself with asking the Question.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I did not, Sir, use the words "put up;" but, I think, I did use the words "brought up to the scratch." The report is accurate, except so far as that I did not say "co-partners," which is a misprint for "hon. Baronets." So far, I am obliged to the hon. Baronet for giving me an opportunity of correcting a rather absurd mistake. Perhaps I should have said "came up to the scratch," instead of "brought up to the scratch." I feel confident that, when he thinks of it, the hon. Baronet will not object to that phrase. But, if he does, I have now to express my frank regret to the hon. Baronet for having said anything in the slightest degree painful either to the hon. Baronet, or to the other hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham.

Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON: I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should refer to those who are best able to speak on the subject whether what he is reported to have said is correct. I should rather like him to inquire of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, or the hon. Member for Nottingham.

MR. GOSCHEN: I thought I had withdrawn the words in the frankest manner. It would be perfectly unnecessary for me to make any inquiry as to the declaration of the hon. Baronet. I am sorry if my answer has given the hon. Baronet any additional ground for complaint.

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—THE RECENT RESIGNATIONS.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I desire to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he can give the House any information on a matter of very great public interest in Ireland. It is, Whether there is any truth in the statement which was published yesterday, that seven members of the Constabulary Force in the South of Ireland resigned their position, and in doing so placed their names to a paper, stating that the proposed Coercion Act of the Government would render the position of the Irish Constabulary intolerable, and that they must decline to be the instruments of carrying out any further evictions which they know to be unjust?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR) (Manchester, E.): I believe, but I am not quite sure, that the number is as stated. I believe it is true that certain members of the Constabulary Force have resigned. I believe they object to their position; but whether they have made any comments on the proposals of the Government I am not aware. I will inquire if the hon. Member desires.

PARLIAMENT—THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE, 1882—RULE 9 (ORDER IN DEBATE)—SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish now to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury a Question arising out of a suggestion which emanated from the Chair on Friday night, apparently with the general concurrence of the House, and as to which I gave a Notice of Motion. I understand that certain communications ensued, and I desire now to ask, Whether the Government assent to a Motion to rescind the Order suspending the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy)? [*Cries of* "No!"]

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I do not think, Sir, that any duty can be more disagreeable than that which falls to the Leader of the House when he has to move that an hon. Member of the House be suspended from the service of the House. I discharged that duty on Friday evening with the greatest possible regret; but the occasion seemed to require it, and with great regret it fell to me to submit that Motion to the House. The occasion was one, Sir, which, in your judgment, required that you should name the hon. and learned Member for North Longford, who had transgressed the Rules of the House in regard to the decencies of debate. It would be utterly out of the question, I apprehend, Sir, when no apology of any kind has been made for the transgression of the order and decency of debate, that any Motion of the kind suggested by the hon. Member would be entertained. I should not be in Order myself in making such a Motion, which could not be entertained, I apprehend, without the general concurrence of the House. Therefore, Sir—and I again express my deep regret at the circumstance which occurred—I regret to say it is not in my power to support any Motion of the kind suggested.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask you, Sir, whether the Leader of the House has correctly stated the law of the House, and whether it is competent for me to make a Motion?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) on Friday night intimated that he would put a Notice on the Paper. No Notice has appeared on the Paper, and if Notice had been handed in at the Table it would have taken its place among the ordinary Notices of Motion, and would not have had precedence as a Question of Privilege, because it affected a Member of the House. It is not, therefore, competent for the hon. Gentleman to make any Motion for the rescinding of the vote of the House. No regular Notice has been given, and I repeat that if any Notice had been given the Notice would have come on in its regular course when the other Notices of Motion were called.

MR. SEXTON: Perhaps you will allow me, Sir, to explain how it happens that I did not place the Notice I had given upon the Paper. I understood that a Motion would be made by the Government on the subject, and I abstained from giving Notice in the unavoidable absence of my hon. and learned Friend, who was not permitted to enter the House. I beg to say, on his behalf, that if the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) had acted in his case as he acted towards me on Friday night, and had withdrawn the offensive charge which he made, my hon. and learned Friend would have withdrawn in his turn the language he had used. But, Sir, as the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh abstains from taking any initiative, I wish to inform the House that I have no instructions on behalf of my hon. and learned Friend to take any action in the matter.

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.): Sir, I should like to ask you one Question. Why is it that when two Members of the House have committed what may be called the same offence—["No, no!"]—one is suspended and the other remains and occupies his seat in the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: Under ordinary circumstances I should have declined to answer the Question which has been addressed to me by the hon. Gentleman, because it seems to imply that my action was not the same towards both hon. Members; but I am quite willing, under the special circumstances, to explain what passed. There was an essential difference between the two cases. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) did make a reflection which I stated at the time was in the nature of a very grave accusation against certain Gentlemen, but not directly against the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy). The hon. and learned Member for North Longford rose and made use of an expression which it was impossible for me to pass over, and I submitted his name for the House to take such action as it might think fit. Subsequently, the hon. and gallant Gentleman made a very direct reference indeed, specifying the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), and the hon. Member for West Belfast did also, under circumstances, I admit, of great provocation, make use of the expression which was offensive to the House; and, as I told him at the time, I should, of course, have to deal with him in the same way as I had been obliged to deal with the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. Some mutual explanations were given, and the offensive words were withdrawn. The two cases were, therefore, different. The hon. Member for West Belfast said something in which I suppose he referred to a communication which I had with him. I have no hesitation in saying what that communication was. I said that, while deeply regretting the circumstance as I did—indeed, I was deeply moved by it—I thought that the matter was out of my hands and rested with the House, and I was of opinion that such a grave offence had been committed against the House that it became the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford to make an unqualified apology to the House for the expression which he had permitted himself to use, and which had offended the dignity of the House and violated the decorum of debate. I said that apology should not be consequential upon any other explanation, but should be made frankly and freely by itself, and then I thought that the House, in the exercise of its judgment, might see its way to reinstate the hon. and learned Member for North Longford; and for all I knew, though I was not competent in any way to make any communication of the kind, nor did I do so, the hon. and gallant Gentleman might possibly offer some explanation showing that he made no direct reference to the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. That is exactly how the matter stands as far as I am concerned, and I leave the issue with the House.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to make an explanation. I did not, Sir, refer to you. I referred to an intimation, or rather to the expression of a hope, on the part of the Government. I think I shall be doing my duty if I now move that Mr. T. M. Healy be heard in his own behalf at the Bar.

Mr. SPEAKER: That cannot be done for this reason. The Order under which I acted is one of summary procedure, and if an Order under the Summary Procedure Standing Order is to be reviewed immediately and debate ensues, then there is an end of the procedure which was intended to be summary. If the hon. Gentleman is authorized to say anything on the part of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford, I believe I am right in saying that the House will listen to him.

Mr. SEXTON: I am authorized by my hon. and learned Friend to say that if the hon. and gallant Member will pursue towards him the course which he pursued towards me, my hon. and learned Friend will withdraw the expression.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): In this state of facts and the feeling that prevails generally in the House, both on account of the Chair and the House as well as on account of the hon. and learned Member for North Longford, there is something to be considered and something to be desired. I wish to put a Question directly to the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh—Whether he is prepared to render any assistance to the House in its present position by any explanation or withdrawal of the expression used by him on a former evening with regard to this matter? [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) rose amid cries of "Withdraw!" from the Irish Members. The hon. and gallant Gentleman said: The circumstance will be in the recollection of many Members of the House that I made a statement in the House to which the hon. and learned Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) took exception. I felt, on consideration, that the statement I had made was one which the Rules of the House did not warrant me in making, and I rose before the event had assumed the aspect it did subsequently to make that admission; but I had not the opportunity of doing so owing to the unfortunate confusion that existed at the time. After that I distinctly stated, as you, Sir, are aware, that I withdrew the statement, which, however entirely I may have personally believed it, I was, nevertheless, incapable of substantiating by such facts as would bring conviction to the mind of the House. I never alluded at all to the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. In regard to the observation that was made personally to myself, that is in the hands of the House. The refusal of the hon. and learned Member to obey the dictates of the Chair is not a matter which concerns me personally, but it concerns the dignity of the House of Commons.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Perhaps it is hardly necessary to carry the matter further; but I wish to be sure that there is no misunderstanding. Am I to understand that the hon. and gallant Gentleman, whatever his own personal belief may be—and I do not question his right to entertain any belief respecting myself or any other person—felt that he was not justified by the Rules of the House in making the statement he did, and that he rose for the purpose of saying so, but was prevented from making the explanation? Am I to understand from the hon. and gallant Gentleman that that is so?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: My statement was that I never mentioned or alluded in any sense, directly or indirectly, to the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. [*Cries of* "Order!" *and* "Withdraw!"]

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE again rose amid cries of "Order!" The right hon. Gentleman said: Do I misapprehend or have I mis-stated the previous part of the answer of the hon. and gallant Member?

Colonel SAUNDERSON did not reply.

Mr. SEXTON: My hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Longford resented the imputation cast upon Irish Members generally, and as the hon. and gallant Member does not withdraw the general charges he made, I am not in a position to go further, or offer any statement, on behalf of my hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I have asked for an explanation without the smallest intention of conveying any offensive expression or idea. Am I to understand that the hon. and gallant Gentleman, with whom I have always been on relations of courtesy, refuses to tell me whether I have rightly understood the former part of his answer?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I have stated distinctly and as clearly as I can my meaning, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will understand exactly the sense of the words I have used.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT (IRELAND) BILL.—[Bill 217.]

(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland.*)

SECOND READING.

ADJOURNED DEBATE. [SEVENTH NIGHT.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment proposed to Question [5th April], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

And which Amendment was,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill,"—(*Sir Bernhard Samuelson*,)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate *resumed.*

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I confess I join the debate on this measure with very considerable repugnance. There are some wrongs that do not invite discussion. There are some insults which, if one cannot practically and effectually repel, it is better, perhaps, in self-respect, that they should endure in silence. This Bill is such a wrong, and it is such an insult to the people of Ireland, and as one of their Representatives, sprung from them, feeling with them, and hoping with them, I feel it to be, in a personal sense, a wrong and an insult to myself. This Bill, put forward by the self-styled promoters of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, is a Bill is to repeal in a sinister sense the Act of Legislative Union. The Union provided one Parliament for these two countries with the view that the Irish Members should have their share of influencing the councils of the Empire, and certainly with the view not less that they should have their full and legitimate share in the course of legislation in this House intended for their country. But this, Sir, is a Bill which ignores the Irish cause here—this is a Bill which reduces to a cipher the representation of Ireland in this House. After this Bill has passed into law you will no longer have a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but you will have a Kingdom of Great Britain and a Slave Settlement of Ireland. The measure, Sir, therefore, is one which I find it exceedingly difficult to discuss with the requisite patience and self-control. I also bear in mind that the Division to be taken in this House will not be a Division upon the merits of this Bill. The managers of the Liberal Unionist vote, the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who had run away from this Division, whose hard crust and self-conceit is probably pierced by the resolution of the "Birmingham Two Thousand," condemning the policy of the Government—these managers of the swivel vote which swings from one side of the House to the other, declared again and again that they will give no vote to drive the present Government out of Office—that they will give no vote the effect of which will be to admit the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) to power. The rejection of this Bill would drive the Government from power and admit the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to Office; and, therefore, the Bill must be adopted, no matter how little cause there may be for its enactment, no matter what injury, confusion, what peril, and what crime it may cause among the Irish people. It is adopted, because in the opinion of two Gentlemen who control certain votes in this House, the rejection of the Bill would lead to the fall of one statesman from power and to the admission of another. A debate upon the Bill, which was not to be decided upon its own merits, but upon a different issue, is not likely to be an earnest and sincere debate. Moreover, we have to bear in mind that a large majority of the Members of this House were returned at the late Election upon pledges of "No coercion for Ireland." [*Cries of* "No, no!"] The hon. Member who objects is one of the Members who is precisely in that position, and if every man in this House who promised his constituents that he would not vote to impose coercive laws on the Irish people were to keep his word in the Lobby, this Bill would be rejected by a majority of 100. I wish to give the House, before I pass on further, an example of what I mean. I am sorry not to see in his place at this moment the noble Lord the Member for the Frome Division of Somersetshire (Viscount Weymouth). He initiated his canvass at the late Election by issuing a placard to the electors of Somersetshire. I shall read the terms of the placard—"Do you want justice to Ireland and no coercion? Then mark your ballot paper thus——" And the name of the Liberal candidate, Mr. Samuelson, appears in modest type opposite a blank square, and the name of the Tory candidate, Viscount Weymouth, appears in imposing characters with a large black cross against it. This was the way in which the noble Lord the Member for the Frome Division of Somersetshire obtained his seat in this House. This was the device by which he turned the majority of 700 against him at the Election of 1885 into a majority of 700 for him at the Election of last year. The noble Lord does not trouble himself about justice to Ireland now. He will vote for coercion to-night. [*Cries of* "No!"] I hope not. But while I express the hope, and trust that the noble Lord in any other walk in life would be sorry and ashamed to reap any personal advantage by such a trick as this, yet, at the same time, I am bound to say that when the majority in this House is largely composed of Gentlemen who give pledges like that to their constituents at the last Election, I feel that it is idle for me to attempt to argue with them. But, Sir, I am bound to remember that the Irish Members here stand no longer alone in their opposition to coercion. They are aided, Sir, by a statesman whose vast experience and profound political insight leave him without a rival. We are helped by the Liberal Party, or at least by every man of them who has retained the confidence of those who sent him here. We are cheered in our struggle daily more and more by the enthusiastic support of vast and increasing multitudes of the general people of Great Britain; and in view of that condition of facts, which is altogether new, we are bound to smother our own feelings, which would, I think, in many cases lead us to treat this Bill with silent contempt; and we are bound out of respect for that illustrious Leader, out of regard for that public-spirited Party, out of gratitude to the generous people who are supporting us throughout Great Britain—we are bound to rise in this debate and vindicate the stand we are obliged to make for the rights and liberties of our people. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) addressed the House on Friday night in a speech which, in one respect, was extremely acceptable to me. The hon. and gallant Member is the spokesman of a lost cause. He knows, he feels that it is a lost cause already, and he resorts to the very loud, the very vulgar, and the very shallow policy—when the merits of the cause opposed to him are too strong—to assail and vilify its advocates. His speech in this House on Friday night was a specimen of the tactics of despair. I wish to ask this simple question. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh acts always with a view to obtaining some political advantage. I ask the House what political advantage the hon. and gallant Member hopes to gain by passing over the merits of the question, whether crime prevails in Ireland, whether witnesses are intimidated, whether juries are afraid to convict—by passing over all the questions fundamental and essential in this case, and fastening himself upon a series of pesonal charges against the Irish Members? Suppose we, the Irish Members here, were driven by calumny and by insult in respect of which we could find no protection—suppose we were driven to resign our seats in this House—a contingency which is not impossible—the men who pretended to doubt that our presence here is the result of the last Election are the very men who are best aware of the fact that our places here, to the precise number of 85, would be taken in a week or two by men as deeply devoted as we are to the liberty of our country and as resolute in their assertion of it. If that were to come to pass, if we allowed ourselves to be replaced — Parliament having become the arena of calumny and insult—we should deem it to be our duty to go through this country from place to place, from town to town, from shire to shire—we should deem it to be our duty to come face to face with the British people, and ask them, as men to men, whether they credit the calumnies that are levelled and launched against us, and we should ask our accusers and calumniators if they dare to follow and meet us before the British people; and, Sir, when we had expounded before the people of this country the true state of the Irish case, and when we had made these generous people feel the infamous character of the tactics employed against us, when the next General Election was at hand the question of the propriety of the course taken by the hon. and gallant Member for Armagh is one which we would be willing to leave to their discretion and determination. The hon. and gallant Member, in the course of his speech, thought it decent to sneer at the courage of the Irish people. I hope if any Irishman puts his own courage to the test the quality would be strong enough. The courage of the Irish people stands on record in the words of the most illustrious of your generals—the courage of the Irish people is proved by the history of your Empire, and by the history of many a military state. It would take more than a Militia critic to cast doubt upon it. The hon. and gallant Gentleman, who is always more gallant in the absence of those whem he attacks, was pleased to say of my hon. Friend beside me, the Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon), that he said in this House to the people of Ireland—"Unless you follow me to battle, I am off." What did the hon. and gallant Member say to his dupes in Belfast? He did not say—"Unless you follow me to battle, I am off;" but he said—"I am off anyhow, and you had better go to battle."

Colonel SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): Would the hon. Member say on what occasion I made that remark?

Mr. SEXTON: That is as accurate a version of the conduct and speech of the hon. and gallant Member in Belfast as was his of my Friend the hon. Member for Mayo. The fact remains in proof that the hon. and gallant Gentleman, in company with the noble Lord beside him (Lord Randolph Churchill) last year excited the people of Belfast to enter into conflict with the armed forces of the Crown. The hon. and gallant Member has seen in this House no reason to deny it; and having done that he left the place and left the country. [An Irish Member: Ran away.] And in the whole movement of the Land League, extending over years, a movement characterized on one side by heartless extortions and by cruel evictions to the number of many thousands, a movement characterized on the other side by utter desperation and despair, and that movement, which the hon. and gallant Gentleman is so fond of stigmatizing, cost far fewer people's lives in the whole of those years than were lost in three months in Belfast by the bullets of the assassins among the dupes of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, whom, after he had excited to mad and criminal conflicts, he had the moral courage to leave to their fate. Sir, the hon. and gallant Member ought to avoid the subject of blood, and he ought to be very slow to talk of courage. On Friday night he made certain charges against Irish Members here; and, Sir, I must say that the qualification of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, his fitness for the post, is proved by his grotesque statement that he is sympathized with by 2,000,000 of Irishmen. There are only about 1,000,000 of men in Ireland; and if he is sympathized with by all the Irishmen in Ireland and 1,000,000 out of it, I fail to understand for one moment how a Coercion Bill can be required for the protection of himself and his friends. Now, let me say this of the Members who have been attacked by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh. Every one of them is a man who has been engaged for several years in the struggle of public life. During those years we have incessantly maintained our public policy here, and continued our movements in Ireland without pause. During three of those years and more the most drastic Crimes Act ever passed was in absolute force in Ireland. During all those years, certainly during several of them, our letters were opened and read by the Government officials in their transmission through the post, our telegrams were scanned by official eyes before they were delivered to us, our steps were dogged from town to town and from county to county by detectives. On any day within the course of that whole three years any Irish Member, or any other Irishman, might have been summoned before a magistrate in his private room in Dublin or anywhere else in Ireland; he might have been interrogated upon oath; he might have been questioned as to any act or word of his life, or any man whom he had ever met, or any man who had ever met him might have been questioned in his regard; and, Sir, with what decency does the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh come forward to make these charges when it is a fact that every Irish Member maintained his place in Ireland during the three years of the Crimes Act, and when private inquiries were held to probe to the uttermost any question of criminality or criminal knowledge existing in the country, not a single Irish Member was either summoned, or as far as I have heard, interrogated by a magistrate? The Government had a very ready way of dealing with cases of suspicion. If they had had a particle of evidence against any Member of this House, they might have put him forward for trial, not before a jury of his own countrymen, but with three Judges for a jury. And after that time of stress and trial had ended, and when Lord Spencer came to England, he, the administrator, the most bold, the most able, and most persistent England has sent in modern times to Ireland—when he returned to England—the man who had the secret springs of administration in his hands, who knew the innermost secrets that all the investigations could give—he returned to England disgusted, as he was, and as he must have been, at the base and wanton calumnies for public ends flung against us in the public Press of this country. By his own motion and of his own accord Lord Spencer came forward and made two public speeches, in which he declared from his official and the unrivalled fulness of his experience that it was absurd and false to charge the Irish Members here, or any Irish Member, with criminality or criminal knowledge. Lord Spencer on Saturday last repeated his testimony. He was exceedingly glad, he said, the matter had come about in the House, as he had himself declared, from official experience, that it was absolutely untrue any Irish Representatives were the associates of murderers. Sir, I would add one other remarkable piece of testimony, that of the one member living who, next to Lord Spencer, is entitled to speak with authority and be heard with respect on any question involving the investigation of criminality or criminal knowledge in Ireland—Sir George Otto Trevelyan, and Sir George Trevelyan explains what he calls the success of the Crimes Act of 1882 by the fact that Lord Spencer laid down two principles, from which during the years of his administration he never swerved. The first of these was to draw a deep and clear line between politics and crime; to punish housebreakers, Moonlighters, murderers, and criminals, and to leave politics alone; and he adds, "over and over again we refused to do what was called, 'putting down the National League.'" Well, Sir, you will not leave the politicians alone. The present Government will not leave them alone. The present Government will induce criminals to run rioting, but they will put politicians down; and, Sir, I wondered on Friday night if the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh when he was referring to me making charges which amounted to nothing less than direct complicity with crime, if he knew at the beginning of the year this Viceroy appointed by his Government conveyed to me the Queen's appointment of High Sheriff of the City of Dublin. My hon. Friend reminds me that the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) was also referred to, and that he had been selected to serve upon a Royal Commission. These facts show that in serious, sane, and sensible minds no weight whatever is attached to the charges which have been made by the hon. and gallant Gentleman against the Irish Representatives. His first charge, Sir, referred to the executive of the Land League, and I shall quote his words—

> "Among these seven shining lights is the hon. Member for Cork himself, the hon. Member for West Belfast, and later on, the Member for East Donegal. Then there were—and he asked the special attention of the House to this—Mr. Patrick Egan, Mr. T. Brennan, Mr. Michael Boyton, Mr. P. J. Sheridan. If hon. Members had a piece of paper and wrote opposite the names 'M' for murderer and 'T' for treason, they would understand the character of these associates of the hon. Member for Cork on the Executive Council."

["Hear, hear!"] Yes, I am about to deal with the accusation—

> "He did not accuse the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends who sat opposite in that House, with ever having embrued their hands with blood, but he did accuse them with having associated with men whom they knew to be murderers."

Now, Sir, in the first place, I shall take the allegations which are false, or if that be an un-Parliamentary expression, I shall take the allegations which are untrue, in the order in which they are made. It is asserted that Mr. Michael Boyton was a member of the Executive Council of the Land League. He never was a member of the Executive Council. Mr. Michael Boyton was merely for a short time one of the numerous staff of agents for the League, and I am at a loss to understand why the name of Mr. Boyton has been mentioned. You, Sir, informed the hon. and gallant Member that this was a matter of debate, and in debate we might reply to it; and you pointed out to the hon. and gallant Member that his duty was to try and substantiate his charges, and I am here to say and prove that not only did he fail to substantiate those charges, but he made no rational effort to substantiate them. After the reference to Mr. Boyton in his speech, the hon. and gallant Member never again made mention of his name. Why did he not proceed to make grave charges against Mr. Boyton? I have seen Mr. Boyton within the precincts of this House up to within a year ago, up to the time I know he lived in London still, a constant visitor to the House, and for all I know he may be living in London still. [*Cries of* "He is."] I am told he is a householder in London still, and I must say if I was the householder, I would make it very unpleasant for the hon. and gallant Gentleman. Mr. Boyton is actually on the ground at the present moment, and after three years of private inquiry in Ireland since the evictions alluded to by the hon. and gallant Gentleman, Mr. Boyton is ready to answer any charge against him, and no charge has been made or hinted, as I understand, until the hon. and gallant Gentleman spoke in the House. How will he make good to Mr. Boyton the grievous wrong and injury he has done him? I pass from the case of Mr. Boyton, and not a word—not a syllable—has passed from the lips of the hon. and gallant Gentleman to make good these horrible accusations. I come to the case of Mr. P. J. Sheridan. The allegation of the hon. and gallant Member against that gentleman is the second falsehood with which I have to deal. Mr. P. J. Sheridan was never a member of the Executive Council of the League. He was for a time one of the numerous staff of agents of the League; but why did the hon. and gallant Gentleman mention the name of Mr. P. J. Sheridan? Did the hon. and gallant Member in mentioning Mr. Sheridan's name intend to include as the associate of murderers the hon. and gallant Member (Colonel King-Harman) who had managed to defeat him in the struggle for the post of Under Secretary for Ireland, because Mr. Sheridan had been the political associate of that hon. and gallant Gentleman. Mr. P. J. Sheridan canvassed for the present Under Secretary for Ireland. [*Cries of* "When!"] You will hear when by-and-bye. What does "when" matter? The principle of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh is this, that if you ever at any time associate with a man for any public purpose you are responsible for everything that man may say or do up to the moment of his death. I think it is ample enough to be responsible for anything a man may do with your knowledge and consent while you are in association with him; and I think, Sir, if the principle is to be laid down that you are responsible for what a man did before your association with him, that it would be a principle against which the present Government would protest, because it would be extremely unpleasant for them to be responsible at the present time for the chequered career of the Under Secretary for Ireland. Mr. P. J. Sheridan was at one time a political agent of the present Under Secretary, and I am assured, on what I consider excellent authority, that the Under Secretary and Sheridan canvassed a western constituency together, and were evidently the best of friends. [*Cries of* "When?"]

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): After the Fenian rising.

Mr. SEXTON: I hope that "When" is quite satisfactory. Now, Sir, I have named two falsehoods. I have shown, and shall be able to prove at any moment, that Mr. Boyton and Mr. Sheridan were never members of the Executive Council of the League. In point of fact, when I, at the request of the hon. Member for the City of Cork, after the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) had been imprisoned under the Crimes Act, when I went to Dublin, at the beginning of May, 1882, to take charge of the Land League, my memory is that Sheridan and Boyton had been put in prison before that time. [*Cries of* "Yes, yes!"] They were the first arrested under the secret Act of Mr. Forster, therefore the connection of these gentlemen with the active working of the League ceases at an early date. Next I come to Thomas Brennan and Patrick Egan. Thomas Brennan and Patrick Egan were secretary and treasurer of the League and were members of the Executive Council. With respect to Egan, let me say he was not only a political associate, but an intimate friend of the new Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman). Before I pass from the name of Mr. P. J. Sheridan, let me say with regard to political association that the first time I ever saw him was at a public meeting in Sligo in 1879, when he endeavoured to prevent me addressing an audience. The next time I saw him was accompanying a deputation of electors at the town of Sligo to endeavour to induce me to retire from my candidature, and I declined to do it and was elected. And the third fact I have to state in connection with him is that when I was returned his house was the only house in the town of Tubbercurry which was not illuminated. My hon. Friend reminds me that the present Under Secretary for Ireland was my opponent on that occasion. Of course, Sir, I am not in a position to say whether any old affection, due to long association, was the cause of the abstention of Sheridan from joining in the manifestations which were made at my return. Mr. Sheridan was a man of fairly good education—he was a man who was educated for the Church—he had a good social position in the County Sligo, and it would have been rather difficult for a man to have taken part in public life in the West of Ireland without meeting Mr. Sheridan. With regard to Mr. Egan, he was known and esteemed for many years as one of the most respectable citizens of Dublin. He was known to be a man of exemplary character in every relation of life, and he took so active and energetic a part in the affairs of the country as even to take part in public affairs, and not to know him would be as easy as to hold a seat in the Corporation without knowing the Lord Mayor. Mr. Egan and the new Under Secretary for Ireland were fellow-members of the council of the Home Rule League. [*Cries of* "Where is he?"] Oh, he is engaged in the discharge of his Departmental duties. This was at the time when the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant was one of the hon. secretaries of the Home Rule League. Patrick Egan and he fought together in many a political enterprise. Mr. Egan was his confidential financial agent in one of his numerous elections. Mr. Egan was the gentleman who wrote for him his political addresses to the electors, and Mr. Egan is a gentleman who can testify with respect to a certain election that the present Under Secretary contributed a considerable sum of money to the funds of a secret society which supplied physical force for the hon. and gallant Member at his election, and which distinguished itself at the same time in various other ways which would form ample material for a diatribe from the Bench by Mr. Justice Lawson. Now I ask the question of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh which side of the House is deepest in this association with Mr. Patrick Egan—the Government or ourselves? The hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel Saunderson) states that a committee of the Land League was formed in Dublin, of which certain gentlemen whose names he has mentioned were the chief officers, and that P. J. Sheridan, a notorious murderer, was the intimate associate of the hon. Member for West Belfast, and the hon. Member for Cork was at the head of the operations of that committee. The hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh then added they ought to have known that he was a murderer. It was made pretty plain subsequently, for a true bill was found against him for complicity in the Phœnix Park murders, and he had to fly for his life. Mr. Egan was the treasurer of the Land League after that; the hon. Member for Cork was put in gaol, and the Land League was suppressed. Now I will convict the hon. and gallant Gentleman of an act which I shall find it hard to characterize. He conveyed to the House in the extract which I have read that the finding of the true bill against P. J. Sheridan and his leaving the country were previous to the suppression of the Land League. Sir, the Land League was suppressed by the Proclamation of the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Cowper, in October, 1881. My hon. Friends on either side of me (Mr. Parnell and Mr. Dillon), myself, and many others were imprisoned a few days before the Land League ceased to exist, and with it ceased the Executive Council of the Land League. The Phœnix Park murder, which as I understand was solely a question in the speech of the hon. and gallant Member, occurred in the month of May, 1882—eight months after the suppression of the Land League. The true bill against P. J. Sheridan was found in the year 1883; and, whilst I do not purpose for the moment to say how far the finding of the Grand Jury, after hearing only one side of the case against a man who had been an active political opponent, can be relied on as any satisfactory evidence of guilt, I would wish to point out the grotesque absurdity of the position of the hon. and gallant Gentleman in blaming the Executive Council of the Land League, which ceased to exist in October, 1881, for not having known that a man was a murderer in respect of a crime committed in May, 1882, and in respect of which a true bill was found in 1883.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: Perhaps I may be allowed to explain. I blamed certain members of the committee. I did not blame the committee at large, and I pointed out that the hon. Member was associated with Patrick Egan in America afterwards.

Mr. SEXTON: Associated with him?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: Yes.

Mr. SEXTON: Yes, certainly. I have not up to the present moment ascertained any fact entitling me to change the opinion I have always held of Mr. Egan, or leading me to regret that I was associated with him. The hon. and gallant Gentleman held members of the Council responsible for sitting with a man who never was a member of the Council and for associating with him months and years before the committal of the crime, and the finding by the Grand Jury of a true bill. I altogether object to the theory that men in public life, whose associates are imposed very often by circumstances and not as the result of choice, and who are bound to associate with tens and hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands of men—I object altogether to the theory that they are to be held responsible for whatever any of these persons might say or do at any time without their knowledge, their cognizance, or their consent. It was said by the hon. and gallant Gentleman that Mr. Egan and Mr. Brennan were associates of the Phœnix Park murderers. By what authority has that statement been made? You, Sir, have very rightly pointed out the duty of the hon. and gallant Member. You have pointed out that he was permitted to introduce those topics into the debate upon the condition that he substantiated his charge. He made no attempt to do so. He said nothing to prove that either Brennan or Egan was implicated in that lamented crime. The hon. and gallant Member said that Sheridan was a murderer, that a true bill was found against him, and that he had to fly for his life. The inference was that Mr. Sheridan fled after a true bill was found. Mr. Sheridan, I had always understood, had left the country and gone to America long before. The hon. and gallant Gentleman labours under a lamentable natural incapacity to make an accurate statement on any matter of fact. [Colonel King-Harman here entered the House and took his seat on the Treasury Bench.] I am sorry that the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Under Secretary should have been absent and not heard texts from the biographies of some of his old and valued friends. I pass to the next statement of the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh—

> "That the hon. Member for West Belfast himself went over to America, and had the pleasure of seeing Patrick Egan, the former President of the American National League, elected President of the Clan-na-Gael, a murder association of America."

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I withdrew that statement. When the hon. Member interrupted me on Friday and said it was not the case, I admitted that I had made a mistake.

Mr. SEXTON: It may be convenient that I should inform the House what did happen in America. I went, at the request of the Irish Party, to attend as their delegate the Convention of the National League at Boston, held at the Faneuil Hall, a very famous hall—the hall in which the Americans resolved to throw tea into Boston Harbour. The

Convention was attended by representative Irishmen from the Dominion of Canada, and from every State and Territory of the Union. There were several hundred delegates, including Judges, barristers, men in high commercial and professional positions, and clergy. The whole of these proceedings were open to the public, every word was reported in the Press, and at that Convention, in my presence, Mr. Egan was elected, by an unanimous vote, President of the National League of America. Was that the occurrence which the hon. and gallant Member grotesquely converted into the presidency of a murder association? The hon. and gallant Gentleman himself must see that he has lost all ground for the serious accusations which he has made. I believe the Clan-na-Gael is one of the Irish associations in America; but my knowledge of it is limited to what I have learnt from the public Press, and whether Egan was ever connected with it is more than I can say. But I do deny, and I believe it to be absolutely false, that any single association of Irishmen would be guilty of any act or of any word which could by the most frantic distortion bear any such interpretation as to justify its being called a murder association. So far, then, the denials of the hon. and gallant Member appear to have come to nothing. The hon. and gallant Gentleman then referred to another incident. He spoke of a supper which he alleged to have taken place in 1884. I can only repeat what I stated on Friday—that I never heard of such a supper. I do not believe that such a supper was ever given; I do not believe that Mr. Egan ever attended it; and whatever may have been the character of the occurrence—if it ever took place—I say that the incident is not relevant to the charges which have been made. As an instance of the absurd animus of the hon. and gallant Member I may notice that, having first spoken of the supper, he said—"After that it was decided to present Mr. Egan with a service of plate," and he gave the names of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, and of the hon. Member for East Mayo, and others, as having subscribed to that service of plate. Sir, that service of plate was the result of a public movement in Ireland at the time when Mr. Egan made up his mind to transfer his home to America. [*Ministerial laughter.*] Well, Sir, I think there was nothing questionable in the choice he made, because at that time the Crimes Act was in force in Ireland, and the man had held a leading position in a Constitutional movement in regard to which he might have been worried and interrupted and imprisoned, and his business ruined and his health endangered; in these circumstances I think common prudence dictated his removal. The testimonial was presented at that time, but it was subscribed for two years before the date of the alleged supper. There we have an instance of the mean and cowardly tactics that are resorted to by the Party of the hon. and gallant Member mixing up dates, and by placing incidents in apparently consecutive order with incidents that had occurred some time previously. I ask the House does a rag of the case made by the hon. and gallant Member remain? Has he in a single case substantiated his charges—that with regard to two of these gentlemen they had been members of the Executive of the League, and with regard to the other two that there was any evidence that they had been engaged in crime? Sir, the whole contention is absurd. I know that since I came into Parliament, six years ago, it has been the practice, on the part of a section of the Press of England, to attack and calumniate the Irish Party. I have paid no attention to these calumnies; I have never troubled myself even to read them. I know they are disseminated for base political ends, without any regard for truth; and whether these calumnies in the Press take the shape of a deliberate lie, or the later shape of a base, manifest, clumsy, and malicious forgery—an act of moral murder worthy of capital punishment—whatever shape these calumnies in the Press may have taken, my personal part has been never to pay any attention to them. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I am speaking now of my personal part—I am speaking for no one but myself; and I have never paid any attention to them, because there are only two ways open to meet them. It having been held that the Members of this House have no remedy in the House for aspersions on their character, there are two ways to meet calumniators—you can only argue with a horsewhip or by an action at law. I do not think it worth while to take the former course; and in regard to the latter, I will leave it to unprejudiced minds in this House to say whether, in the present state of political feeling in England in reference to the Irish Question any Member here. [*Interruptions and Cries of* "Oh!"] Yes; one dissentient juror would do; and do you not think the Primrose League would be able to provide him. The Sheriff of the Old Bailey could call a jury at his own discretion. Put it to any rational man whether an Irish Member who, in a time of profound political excitement like this, brought an action for libel before an English jury. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] I have no doubt in the world that if the hon. Member who says "Oh" were on the jury he would supply the dissentient juror. I say that any Irish Member who did that would be voluntarily lending himself to an elaborate farce, which could, of course, have only one result; but here it is a different thing. Charges of complicity in crime are made in this House in our presence. I have replied to-day to the charges that were made. I shall never do so again while I continue to be a Member of this House. Never shall I stoop to analyze in detail any such further charges; but, Sir, if it be a fact that the law of this House allows charges of personal crime and complicity with crime between Member and Member to be made matter of debate; if it be a fact that language can be employed on the floor of this House between Member and Member which in any other country in the world, among men of any social grade, would lead to a deadly breach of the peace—if it is consonant with the law of this House that such language may be employed, and that it turns out, as it turned out to-day, that the responsibility of the Member making these unfounded charges is but an empty form, then I say for myself that I deem it to be the duty of any Member so attacked to see whether, in some manner or some form, his responsibility cannot be made real. Now, Sir, I have dealt, so far as I could go, with the charges of the hon. and gallant Member, and I pass to the consideration of the Bill. The hon. and gallant Gentleman has been inconveniently frank in reference to the object of the Bill. We have heard of the prevalence of crime; we have heard of the intimidation of witnesses; we have heard of the timidity of juries in returning just verdicts according to their oaths. Did the hon. and gallant Member attribute the Bill to any of these causes? No. To him the be-all and end-all of the Bill is that it will put down the National League. Does the hon. and gallant Member deny that he is not a more competent critic of Irish affairs than Sir George Trevelyan?

Colonel SAUNDERSON: Yes; I do.

Mr. SEXTON: Then, he does more credit to his modesty than his good judgment. Sir George Trevelyan attributes the success of the Crimes Bill of 1882 to the fact that by it a broad line was drawn between criminals and politicians, and that the Government did not interfere with the operations of the National League. The National League is not the only association in Ireland. Sir George Trevelyan, in his public letter, refers to another society that is in existence in that country. He refers to the Orange Society. The hon. and gallant Member opposite (Colonel Saunderson) is an ornament to the Orange Society. That society three generations since was baptized in blood, and has thriven on outrage. For three generations in Ulster that society has pursued a course of outrage with impunity, hedged round with Orange magistrates on the bench, by Orange juries in the box, by Orange partizans bearing the wand of the Sheriff and wearing the ermine of the Judge. Hear the language of Sir George Trevelyan in reference to the Orange Society—

> "In the autumn and winter of 1883 the Orange Association raised disturbances of such a serious nature that law and order could be maintained only by armies of 1,200 or 1,400 soldiers and police. There is not the slightest doubt that if such a condition of things were to occur under these sections, all Orangemen, however eminent, who had taken part in transporting to the scene of action bodies of armed men would be liable, and, if there is any fair play in the world, ought to be liable, to be punished as common criminals. But the Government have effectually provided against the contingency by proposing to enact that the House of Lords may veto the action of the Lord Lieutenant."

Yes, Sir, Ireland is to be made the happy hunting ground of the Orange Party. The Irish people are to be given over into the hands of two of the Order—one sitting on the Treasury Bench in this House and the other sitting in

Dublin Castle. Sir George Trevelyan goes on to say—

> "In one case 3,500 Orangemen were brought from a distance by train, and there would have been something little short of a massacre of the people of the neighbourhood who had walked in to attend a perfectly legal meeting, if the commanding officers of the very large force of Her Majesty's troops and constabulary had not behaved with exemplary skill and decision."

That, Sir, was the occasion when the Orangemen displayed their courage by dropping sackfuls of revolvers in their flight. Sir George Trevelyan goes on to say—

> "The Attorney General for Ireland and the recently nominated Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) took a prominent part in defence of these unwarrantable proceedings by which it was attempted, at any risk to the public peace and to human life, to defeat the resolution of securing fair play all round which Her Majesty's representatives had adopted. I have no ill-will, and much the opposite, towards Colonel King-Harman; but I cannot refrain from saying in the most emphatic terms which I can command that he and the Attorney General for Ireland are not the proper men to be councillors of the Lord Lieutenant, and to have themselves an amount of power over the liberties of their countrymen which far exceeds anything that can be imagined or believed by those who have not been behind the scenes of Irish administration."

That, Sir, is the verdict passed publicly on the policy of the Government by one of the ablest public servants of the day—by the ex-Minister, who, next to Lord Spencer, knows most of the subject with which he deals. Ireland is to be given over to the hands of a blood-stained and unscrupulous faction, and you are about to put down the National League. What is the National League? Some of you are pleased to call it a criminal conspiracy. The National League, Sir, is the soul and strength of the struggling Irish people. It has the aid and the council of the prelates of the Church of the people—[*Laughter from* Mr. DE LISLE]—a church which I boldly say—although the only Catholic opposite laughs—there is no Gentleman in the House who derides the compliment I am about to pay the Catholic Church but the only Catholic opposite.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I rise to Order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Gentleman says I have derided the compliment about to be paid to the Catholic Church, and I think I should be in Order in saying that the section of the Catholic Church—[*Loud cries of* "Order!" and "Question!"]

MR. SEXTON: You are out of Order; sit down, Sir, sit down!

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Gentleman does not appear to have risen to a point of Order.

MR. SEXTON: I hope the hon. Gentleman's perceptions of theology are more just than his perceptions of Order. I again say that the National League has been aided and counselled by the Prelates of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and was about to add that the Catholic Church has, in various countries and under different forms of life, incessantly struggled to maintain the moral law and the stability of just Governments. The priests of the Catholic Church are the presidents and vice presidents of the branches of the League. The committees in towns are members of Municipal Bodies, and in the country districts Poor Law Guardians, the only elective positions your system of rule allows the Irish people. There are 1,500 branches of the League scattered, not in Connaught and Munster alone, but in Leinster and Munster as well, and I should think that the membership contains 500,000 men, while among its sympathizers are included the mass of the Irish people; and it is this great public organization, which is practically synonymous with the people of the nation, whose constitution is an open record and as public a document as any Statute of the Realm—it is this organization that you endeavour to stigmatize as a criminal conspiracy, maintained and counselled by traitors, murderers, dynamitards, and criminals. The League is maintained by the mass of the American people. I know that when I was in America myself, and addressed a public meeting in the Boston Institute, and the Chairman was the Governor of the State of Massachusetts—the Governor of a State with a population as large as that of Ireland—the Mayor spoke there, and the other speakers included Senators, Congressmen, and a number of the most distinguished public men of the district. Do you count as nothing the resolutions passed by the State Legislatures? And if you are determined to think little of the United States, have you no regard for the opinion and appeal of men of your own blood in Canada? We are mainly supported by murderers and dynamitards. Well, I should be sorry to hold the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh responsible not merely for the acts of the Orange Society, but for the acts of his own family. I should be sorry to hold him responsible for the acts of his own first cousin, who is president of a National League in America.

Colonel SAUNDERSON: I wish to inform the hon. Gentleman that I have no first cousin in America.

Mr. SEXTON: Then if he is not a first cousin he is a second cousin. He is a cousin of some sort, because I have received indisputable authority, which I shall be happy to transfer to the hon. and gallant Gentleman, that this relative is a most prominent and irrepressible National Leaguer in America. I believe that every adult member of the hon. and gallant Gentleman's family, except himself, is a Nationalist. Sir, it is a contention so absurd that it will no longer gull even the most credulous of the English people that a League which has the sympathy and support of the great mass of two races—English and Irish—of the English-speaking people, is a criminal conspiracy supported by dynamitards. Sir Redvers Buller told you the truth about the National League. He told you that the people of Ireland assumed the National League to be their sole salvation, and you now propose to take that salvation away, and to throw the Irish people naked into the hands of their enemies. Sir Redvers Buller told you that the law in Ireland was the rich man's law, and until the League arose the people had no friend. Yet you propose to take away the people's only law and make the landlord's law supreme. There were 300 witnesses examined by the Cowper Commission, and of these only seven were police witnesses, four of them were magistrates, and three officers of police. I went carefully through the evidence of these seven men, and the impression their evidence left on me is this—the general current of their testimony is that the League in Ireland, so far from having instigated crime of any kind, was aiming to put down crime. One of the Commissioners, a gentleman who was irrepressible in his way, Lord Milltown, suggested it was the game of the National League to put down crime in Ireland. It is if you like the game of the League to put down crime in Ireland, but it is the game of the Government now to create crime. If you pass this Bill the Lord Lieutenant may proclaim as a dangerous society any society formed for the purpose of committing crime, the crime being anything punishable by the Act. A speech at a public meeting may be a crime. The Lord Lieutenant may proclaim any society that incites to intimidation. Now, what is intimidation? It is to put anyone in fear of injury to himself or to any one of his family, or anyone in his employment, or to put him in fear of any loss of income. If a society of tenants meet and demand abatements in their usual rents the Lord Lieutenant can proclaim that society, for any action they might take would undoubtedly put the landlord in fear of a loss of income. No society can exist for the purpose of relieving any grievance between class and class; no public speeches can be made for the purpose of exposing the grievances of any individual or a class; no paper can receive any advertisement or report calling attention to grievances or hardships without falling under the law of the Lord Lieutenant. Sir, the Bill takes away at one fell stroke all the cherished rights of the Constitution. It takes away the right of association. It takes away the right of personal freedom. It takes away the right of freedom of speech. It takes away the right of public meeting. It takes away the right of trial by jury. For what becomes of trial by jury under this Act? The Irish Law Officer of the Crown (the Attorney General) now walking down the floor of the House, that distinguished and learned Gentleman can take a man charged with any offence in any part of Ireland before 12 of his political enemies. The Bill retains the form of trial by jury, but it is rotten in substance. The two provisions of the Bill which I regard as mere dead cargo to be thrown overboard when we get into the stormy waters of Committee, are the provisions for the permanency of the Bill, and for the change of venue to England. In November of last year the Chief Secretary for Ireland described the condition of Ireland. The crime in December was not more than one-half of that in September. The facts were before the then Chief Secretary, when he declared that the state of Ireland left nothing to be desired. Moreover, is it not a fact that crime for the first quarter of the present year is less than the average for the last quarter of last year? If, then, the state of Ireland is satisfactory, I ask how can the Government initiate a policy of coercion in face of the diminishing bill of crime? You can not rely upon any change that has occurred between November and February, and you can not reasonably make a Coercion Bill permanent. The perpetual clause of the Bill cannot stand, and it will disappear in Committee. The provision for the change of venue will also disappear. Even if the provision with reference to the change of venue were retained the Government would never bring a man to London, because to do so would not be to place him on his trial but to convict him. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] Yes, to convict him. The change of venue would be a distinct intimation to an English jury to the following effect:—"I think this man ought to be convicted; I am unable to obtain a verdict in Ireland"—which was of course what the Crown desired—"and I depend upon you to give a verdict of guilty." This proposal to bring Irishmen to trial in England revives many bitter memories which most men ought to be glad to let die. In Scotchmen it revives the memory of Sir William Wallace, and of the insurgents of 1715 and 1745, who were torn from their native land and handed over to be hanged by the neck till dead under the form of trial by jury. In Irishmen it renewed the memory of the sainted Oliver Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh. The Irish Law Officer of the Crown of that day saw he could not get a conviction in Ireland, so he brought the Archbishop to London for trial, and the Archbishop pathetically appealed to Judges who knew nothing of him not to declare him guilty until they were aware of his antecedents. He pleaded for delay until his witnesses and records could be produced; but he pleaded and appealed in vain. He was cheerfully and willingly found guilty by a British jury, and was hanged at Tyburn.

Mr. DE LISLE: On the evidence of Irish priests. [*Cries of* "Perjurers!" *and* "Traitors!"]

Mr. SEXTON: On the evidence, Sir, of two unfrocked and disgraced friars who bore the same relation towards the priests of the Irish Church as some Catholics to-day bear to its laity. The great Archbishop of Armagh was taken to Tyburn after the verdict of the English jury and was hanged. He was cut down alive, was disembowelled before death, was beheaded, was drawn and quartered. This was the result of the last trial of an Irishman taken away from Ireland to be tried before an English jury. I do not say I think the same may happen now. I think you would have to pack a jury, and I think you would do it. I am certain that you would pack a jury; I am certain that if you took the trouble to bring a man from Ireland, and pay the expenses of his witnesses and counsel, you would carefully pack a jury for a conviction. Packing juries is a very seductive art. Let the Law Officers commence to pack English juries for the conviction of Irishmen, and the conviction of Englishmen by packed juries in England is certain and sure to follow. There are great political movements looming up in England, there are privileged classes trembling for their position, and if Englishmen once allow the authorities to arrange for the commonest and the poorest of Irishmen an artistic jury at the Old Bailey, they will have allowed the insertion of the wedge that would rive the oak of their own liberty. I believe that Englishmen can see that this would be the result of your proposal. I am sure of nothing more than this—that the provision for the change of venue to England was introduced for the purpose of a display when we get into the stormy waters of Committee, for then we will have some public-spirited Liberal Unionist, like the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay), rising on this side of the House and protesting against the provision, and the Government gracefully giving way with a great parade of concession. I have said that this Bill is not due to anything in the current state of Ireland. It is not due to any prevalence of crime, for the Government have gone so far as to say that if even the amount of crime had gone down, the condition of the country might be worse. And I find that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) has come to the logical conclusion that if crime disappeared in Ireland, the condition of the country may then be the most dangerous of all. The Bill is not due to Boycotting, for the Prime Minister has admitted that Boycotting could not be put down by law. My belief is that Boycotting, in its minor or major forms, is an irrepressible growth of public opinion engaged in defence of the public interest against an oppressive law. I have read in the evidence before the Commission that a man at a fair in Ireland refused to make a purchase because some individual winked at him. How can you indict a wink? That is a question for the Home Secretary to ponder over. We have heard that when a certain person entered a church that the congregation left to the last man. How can you prevent that by law? The hon. and learned Member for Inverness inquired in a former speech how the congregation became unanimous. He seems to find it difficult to understand unanimity on any question, considering that although he had Lord Lovat's carriages and a staff at his disposal, he was returned by a majority of only about 200 for his own constituency. I will state a fact which to a person of his distinguished attainments does not appear plain. It is a fact that persons in Ireland who facilitate evictions, who take evicted farms, who enable the landlords to raise the standard of rent, and stand in the way of poor men earning an honest living—it is a fact that on these there is a political unanimity of condemnation. I think the Home Secretary, as a Catholic himself, would find it difficult to persuade a congregation to remain at mass. These are typical cases that arise. The only way to deal with Boycotting is to obtain for the law the sympathy of the people, and when you do that then Boycotting of itself will die a natural death. I maintain, also, that there is nothing in regard to the conduct of juries entitling the Government to introduce this Bill. I ask the House to notice one or two remarkable facts in the Returns. I find that in the year 1881, when the ordinary law was in force, the convictions for agrarian offences in Ireland were only 1 in every 21 crimes committed. In the year 1882 the Crimes Act came into force. It was in force for half the year, and the convictions obtained from juries were only 1 in 24. I come to the last year under the ordinary law, and I find there was 1 conviction in every 16 crimes committed. Thus the ordinary law in regard to verdicts proved one-third more efficacious than the coercion law in getting verdicts from juries. That, I contend, is a final and conclusive fact. The object of this Bill, I repeat, is not to put down crime; but it is well expressed in a sentence which slipped inadvertently from the mouth of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said—

> "We wish to pass this Bill in order to frustrate designs which would render nugatory our measure of land legislation."

This is not a Bill in view of crime done in the past. It is not a Bill in view of intimidation or failure of justice in the present. It is a Bill of anticipation. It is a Bill for the condemnation of the people in advance. The Government have taken the leaf out of the book of certain Judges in Ireland, who, if the jury returned a verdict that displeased them, adjourned the whole of the Assizes for fear the rest of the cases might have an equally unsatisfactory result. The Government apprehend the policy of making a man bankrupt to save him from ruin. They apprehend the Irish people will not receive with gratitude a Land Purchase Bill to sell lands at a landlord's price. They want to secure in advance that there shall be no condemnation or united action, and that each individual tenant shall be placed at the mercy of each individual landlord. It would have been wiser had they tried their remedial legislation first—to have offered the Irish people such remedies as they were able to give, and then, if the difficulty arose in regard to law and order, to have resorted to coercion. I tell the Government the cruel and hypocritical policy of this Bill will fail. The Irish people will not move one inch from their present position. They are too firm now to be bullied, and too intelligent to be cajoled. If the National League is put down, they will combine in one form or another, owing to the necessity of the case. They will combine for reasons stated by your own Commission, and cited by Sir Redvers Buller in his report, that the rents in Ireland are rents that cannot be paid. When that is the case, it is necessary for the people to combine against them, and the day will come before long when you will discover the fatuity of the policy which condemned you to strike the Irish people before you that came to their assistance. The majority in this House will, perhaps, be able to pass this Bill. [*Ministerial cheers.*] If hon. Members holloa now, they do so too soon. It is well not to holloa until you are out of the wood, and perhaps you are not out of it yet. If you pass this Bill you will pass it in defiance of your own speeches, in violation of your own pledges, in defiance of notorious facts, in opposition to the evidence of your own official witnesses, in face of the plea of urgency for the relief of the Irish people put before you by the Cowper Commission, against the will of the Members for Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and the body of the Liberal Members for England who retain the confidence of the people; you will pass it in the face of the unmistakable demonstration of hostility on the part of the British people themselves. The day that witnesses your fall from power will see this wretched Act fall dead beside you; and it is in that belief, in the belief that the Government have made certain their own ruin, that I say whatever may be the result of the Division to be taken to-night, that the eventual result of this Bill will be to make more firm the resistance of the Irish people to oppression; and the day of the fall of this Government will be the earliest day when the English people, in the exercise of their Constitutional power, will be able to avenge your treachery to them and to punish your tyranny to Ireland.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that, in response to what he has described as "the generous and spirited Party" which now supports a certain policy with regard to Ireland, the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton) who has just sat down has been induced to break the silence which he says he would have preferred to maintain throughout this debate. It is somewhat remarkable that what the hon. Member now describes as "the great and generous and spirited Liberal Party" was described but a very short time ago in a document to which, I believe, he affixed his own name as "the most perfidious, the most venal, and the most contemptible Party" which had ever existed in this country or that ever governed the nation. I do not know whether the character which is now given to it by the hon. Member will be of any great value to Gentlemen composing that Party, when it appears that an entire change in the opinion of the hon. Member and his Friends can be won by a change of policy on the part of the Party in regard to a particular measure. I do not suppose the hon. Member and his Friends deny that when my right hon. Friend who sits near me (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) was governing Ireland under coercion, they thought they were doing their duty as conscientiously by that country as they do now when advocating measures of concession. But that consideration has no effect whatever on the minds of the hon. Gentleman and his Friends, and it comes to this, that when we are doing what they dislike they describe us as "venal and contemptible," and when we are doing what they like we are a "generous and spirited" Party. Now, Sir, I am glad that the hon. Member's deference to this "generous and spirited" Party has induced him to break silence, because we have heard to-night the defence which the hon. Member thinks necessary and sufficient to the charges which have been made against him and his Friends in this House, and we have also observed what is the attitude the hon. Member and his Friends think it necessary and becoming to take in regard to charges which have been made—not in this House. The House will remember the passionate indignation with which some charges were repudiated by the hon. Member and his Friends the other night. Well, Sir, denials, bare denials, of statements are not very infrequent among hon. Members who follow the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). Last year I made a statement in a speech in the country with regard to the connection between the hon. Member for Cork and certain Fenian societies in America. The hon. Member, on the next day, through the public Press, contradicted the statement which I then made, and said that it was absolutely false. Parliament met almost immediately afterwards, and I anticipated that the hon. Member would have taken some opportunity of calling attention to the statement which I made, and which he described as absolutely false, and would have shown on what grounds he denied it, when I should have been prepared to state the grounds on which I made it. I thought I had the terms of the denial of the hon. Member with me; but, to the best of my recollection, it was to this effect. I stated that, through the Land League and through the National League, there had existed, and I believe did exist, a connection—I could not say how close or how intimate, but a connection and communication—between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Fenian organization in America. That was the statement.

MR. PARNELL (Cork): And I stated that it was absolutely false; I say so still.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: The hon. Member denied, and still denies, what I had stated. Whatever else may be the effect of statements that have recently been made, whatever other importance may be attached to them by hon. Members of this House, the statements that have lately appeared in *The Times* newspaper, which have been widely circulated, absolutely and to the letter justify every syllable which I then stated, and which has been denied by the hon. Member. The hon. Member said, in the same contradiction, that, except through the public Press, he knew nothing about who were the Fenian leaders in America. Well, Sir, I do not know whether, through the public Press or otherwise, the hon. Member knows any more on that subject than he did last July. I believe—I have reason to believe—that men such as Ford, and Egan, and Finnerty, and John Devoy, and Brennan, and Alexander Sullivan, and General Kerwin, and others who are mentioned, are Fenian leaders; and I say that the statements that have recently been published in *The Times* do prove conclusively that there are means of communication between the hon. Member and his Friends and the men whose names I have just read.

MR. PARNELL: Will the noble Marquess give the reasons he has for supposing that those gentlemen whose names he has mentioned are leaders of the Fenian organization in America, for I do not know them to be such, and I do not believe that they are such?

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I believe them to be leaders of the Fenian organization from knowledge which I had when I was last in Office. I believe them to be leaders of the Fenian organization because it has been repeatedly and distinctly stated in newspapers of every description that they are so; and so far as I know without contradiction. I do not know whether the hon. Member is prepared to deny that Mr. Alexander Sullivan—to mention one name—is, or has been a leader of the Clan-na-Gael Association. I do not know whether the hon. Member calls that a Fenian association, but the Clan-na-Gael Society is what I intended and meant when I spoke of the Fenian association in America, and I believe it is an undoubted fact, which cannot be denied, that Mr. Alexander Sullivan—whose name I have mentioned—is, or has been, president of that society. Well, Sir, it is very easy to use strong language in contradiction in this House, but charges just as strong and just as offensive have been made out of this House; they have been reiterated over and over again openly and ostentatiously, and in a manner designed to expose those who make them to an action for criminal libel, and up to the present time no notice has ever been taken of them. The House has heard an explanation from the hon. Member for West Belfast as to the reason why he and his Friends have not resorted to that course. It seems to me that the opinions he expresses about the possibility of getting a fair verdict from an English jury do not harmonize very well with the profession of confidence in the British people which we have heard.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): What I said was, that the Sheriffs of Middlesex and a branch of the Primrose League might be able to send one dissentient.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: The hon. Member to-night has told British jurors and the British people that he believes that if an action were brought by him and his Friends of criminal libel against *The Times* newspaper for making a series of the most offensive and most libellous—[An hon. MEMBER: Most lying.]—yes, most lying charges if they are not true—he tells the British people and British jurors that he will not trust them to give a verdict according to the evidence and to their oath, but takes it for granted that there will be at least one who will perjure himself against them. It appears that the hon. Member has no confidence whatever in the effect on the mind of the British people which a conclusive demonstration of the untruth of these accusations would have, even if he did get a disagreement in the jury. Does the hon. Member attach no importance to having the opportunity afforded him in a court of law and upon oath to disprove these most damaging assertions which have been made? I think, as I have said before, that the excuse which is given by the hon. Member is not one that will be satisfactory to the people of this country, and it contains a very grave imputation upon their character. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) the other day described these charges which have been made as rubbish. A little later, some of them were repeated in this House, and by the passionate denials they excited it appeared that some hon. Members below the Gangway did not consider them to be rubbish. I must again point out that the denial of the charges is not disproof. Let them disprove those charges on oath if they are able to do so. Let me point out one or two of those charges that are made. I say nothing of their truth myself. I will only point out what has been alleged—and I am not pledging myself to the veracity, to the truth or the untruth, of those assertions. The hon. Member has dealt at considerable length with one of them. The hon. Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson) may not have stated his case with absolute accuracy, but the assertion made in *The Times* article has not been disproved or even denied by the hon. Member.

Mr. SEXTON: What assertion?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The assertion in *The Times*.

Mr. SEXTON: Which was that?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The assertion in the article in *The Times*——

Mr. SEXTON: I have never read the article.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The allegation in the article in *The Times* was that the hon. Member for Cork, the hon. Member for West Belfast, and the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. Arthur O'Connor) had been members with Egan, Brennan, Boyton, and Sheridan of the Executive Committee of the Land League. The hon. Member has denied that Boyton and Sheridan were members of that Committee. He says they were agents. Will he deny that they were—as they are described in *The Times* article—the chief organizers of the Land League?

Mr. SEXTON: They were never anything of the kind.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The assertion made in *The Times* was, that of these men I have mentioned some have in speeches advocated assassination, and that others have been implicated in conspiracies to murder as well.

Mr. SEXTON: When?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: That is the allegation made in *The Times*.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I was the chief organizer of the Land League, and these gentlemen acted under me during all the time they were agents of that association, under my direction, and I wish to ask the noble Marquess when they made such speeches?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The speeches referred to were, to the best of my belief, made in 1880 and 1881.

Mr. DILLON: Nothing of the sort.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I maintain that they were. The quotations are given in those articles as from speeches made in March, 1881, by Mr. Brennan, and by Mr. Boyton in May, 1880; on the 18th of August, the 20th of June, and the 24th of October—all, I believe, in 1880 and 1881. I am not making myself responsible for these statements; but I say that these are allegations made, the truth of which is not disproved, and the untruth of which it is open to the hon. Member to prove if he thinks it is worth while to do so, or if he thinks it possible. But that is not all that has been alleged. There is a further accusation to which the hon. Member made no reference. It is alleged that the Land League and the National League have received large sums of money collected in America through the agency of the *Irish World*. It is alleged that during the same period the *Irish World* has been openly advocating the use of dynamite and assassination. It is alleged further that the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor), so late as September, 1883, was in association with Mr. Ford, the editor of the *Irish World*; and it is alleged further that the American Land League was founded in July, 1882; that among its promoters were Egan, Brennan, Sheridan, Boyton, and John Walsh—

against whom a true bill for murder had been found—and Sullivan, whom I have mentioned as president of the Clan-na-Gael. It is further alleged that the hon. Member for Cork sent to this Committee or Convention a telegram acknowledging it "as the most representative expression of Irish-American opinion that had ever been assembled." It is alleged that in 1884 the hon. Member for West Belfast, and either the hon. Member for North Wexford (Mr. J. E. Redmond) or the hon. Member for North Fermanagh (Mr. W. H. K. Redmond), attended the meeting of that association, of which Mr. Egan was president.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): What association?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: The American Land League, some of the names of the promoters of which I have just read. It is alleged that in 1886 the hon. Member for North Wexford and the hon. Member for East Mayo, with Mr. W. O'Brien, attended another meeting of the American Land League; that there they met Mr. Davitt, Mr. Ford, the editor of the *Irish World*, and Mr. Egan, to whom reference has already been made. It is stated that on that occasion Mr. Finnerty, whom, I believe—though I do not know any more than the hon. Member for Cork does—to be one of the leaders of the American Fenian Association, openly praised the "sword of the rebel and the poignard of the assassin." These are some of the allegations which have been made in the articles to which I refer.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I rise to Order. The noble Marquess has made allusion to charges made against me, among others, in *The Times*. I wish to ask him why he does not make the charge which is made against me in those articles that I was present in 1883 at the Convention of Chicago, and that I sat there between O'Donovan Rossa and Ford, and by my silence approved of the new campaign of arson and murder in England?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: Does the hon. Member ask me why I do not make that charge? It is because I read in *The Times* this morning that it was a different man.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I ask the noble Marquess, as he took some charges from *The Times*, and gave its authority for the charges against me, why he was not honourable enough and honest enough to state, without any suggestion or interrogation from me, that *The Times* acknowledged it had lied in a most abominable way in a most important matter?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: *The Times* has corrected one part of the statement made with reference to the hon. Member.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: Why did you not say so?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I am not making the allegations. What *The Times* has alleged, and what is not denied, is that in 1883 the hon. Member was in communication with Mr. Ford, the editor of the dynamite organ, the *Irish World*. All I have done is to point out that allegations have been made in the most public manner—in the most offensive manner—and in a manner which must expose the writers to a criminal action, and I say that it is for the hon. Members themselves to consider whether these statements are worth disproving, and whether they are capable of disproof. It may be said that these things are somewhat irrelevant to the subject we are discussing. When one of the imputations made against legislation of this kind is that it is aimed against the National League, that it will have a tendency to injure it, and may possibly even tend to its suppression, it appears to me that it is relevant to the question before us to learn what is the nature of the relations the leaders of the National League have with the leaders of other associations in America, the objects of which are certainly not legal and certainly not peaceable. An attempt is now being made to condemn this Bill on account of its excessive stringency; and particular clauses are pointed to as being more stringent than were ever introduced in any Coercion Bill. As I have said on a former occasion, I altogether object to the methods now being pursued of anticipating the discussion of every stage of the Bill. We discussed the introduction of this Bill on the Address; we discussed it again on the Motion for Urgency; we discussed the second reading on the Motion to introduce it, and now we are discussing the Committee stage on the Motion for the second reading. Let me refer to one or two points that have been mentioned. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby says that if the Government had introduced their remedial legislation first, and at the same time clauses representing intimidation, he would not have opposed it. Well, it seems to me that my right hon. Friend and those who act with him have somewhat spoiled their case by the vehement opposition they offered to the introduction of the Bill before they knew any of the provisions which it contained. Certainly, if I understood the drift of the speech of my right hon. Friend on the Motion for Urgency, he was absolutely opposed to any exceptional legislation whatever, because he thought the real remedy for anything that was remiss in the state of Ireland at present was to be found in the Home Rule proposals, and nothing in the nature of repressive legislation of any kind. But a great deal was said by my right hon. Friend the other night as to the provision respecting criminal conspiracy which is contained in the 1st sub-section of the second clause. Now, I understand his legal definition of the effect of that sub-section was denied by the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket). Further, the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works undertook to say, on the part of the Government, that if it should be found, in discussion in Committee, that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby's interpretation of the legal effect of that clause was the correct one, the Government were prepared to consider the adoption of other words not liable to the objections of the right hon. Gentleman. But, Sir, I want to ask my right hon. Friend whether the sub-section respecting criminal conspiracy makes any change in the law or creates any new offence whatever? As far as I understand it, it creates no new offences at all. All the Bill does is to transfer the jurisdiction from Judge and jury to a Court of summary jurisdiction, and if the abominable Judge-made law which my right hon. Friend described is of the nature which he described, then it seems to me that the real remedy would be to propose an alteration of this law, which at present affects not Ireland only, but England also, and to introduce into the law of criminal conspiracy, which he says is a Judge-made law, some equitable and reasonable amendments, such as have been made in the law of criminal conspiracy affecting trade unions. Then, again, with respect to the infamous Whiteboy Acts to which my right hon. Friend referred. One would suppose, reading from his speech, that the Whiteboy Acts were being incorporated by this Bill for the first time in the legal system of Ireland. I do not believe that to be the case. I believe that the Whiteboy Acts are part of the law of the land. All that the Bill does is to transfer the jurisdiction from the Judge and jury to a Court of summary jurisdiction; and when these Acts are described as infamous and abominable, I ask my right hon. Friend whether he has read the Paper which has been laid on the Table of the House. I conceive that where the Whiteboy Acts were infamous and abominable was in the severity of the penalties. I do not find that there is anything in the definition of the offences themselves which can be properly described as infamous and abominable; and if there is, I ask the right hon. Gentleman how it is they have been maintained as a part of our system of law for so many years, during which he has been a Member of the Government, and responsible for the law prevailing in the country. Sir George Trevelyan has also spoken of the new and extreme powers which are contained in the 6th and 7th clauses of this Bill. I do not think it necessary to enter into complete detail on that point; but if hon. Members will examine the provisions contained in the Crimes Act of 1882, in regard to unlawful associations, and the penalties attendant on wilfully and knowingly belonging to an unlawful association, I think they will find that the distinction between the present proposals of the Government and those adopted in 1882 are not so wide as Sir George Trevelyan seems to suppose. Now, Sir, to look for a moment to the case for the Bill. It seems to me that all the references of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby to the speeches of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), and the conduct of the late Conservative Government in 1885, are absolutely irrelevant to this case. They would be perfectly relevant if the abandonment of the Crimes Act and the return to the ordinary law had been successful; but, as it is admitted—I believe on both sides—that the return to the ordinary law was not successful, it seems to me that these references are absolutely irrelevant. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) say in introducing the Home Rule Bill last year? He said—"The return to the ordinary law cannot, I am afraid, be said to have succeeded." But the figures which my right hon. Friend quoted, if they tell against the late Conservative Government—if they serve to found a charge of inconsistency against the late Conservative Government—tell just as much against himself. What do those figures show? They show that in 1885 the record of crime in Ireland was a falling one. The number of agrarian offences was diminishing. But, notwithstanding this fact, the Government of which my right hon. Friend was a Member had decided in 1885 to propose the renewal of some of the clauses of the Crimes Act. Therefore, Sir, the figures which the right hon. Gentleman quoted the other night for the purpose of convicting the Government of inconsistency in this matter are equally efficacious to prove inconsistency on the part of my right hon. Friend himself. Sir, I charge no inconsistency against my right hon. Friend and his Colleagues. They appear to me in this matter to have one sufficient excuse; and I do not see why they should think it necessary, having one good excuse, to fall back on a great many other excuses which are not good at all. I do not see why it is necessary for them to fall back on such an excuse as that they were not aware of the opinion of the Irish people on this matter as shown by the Irish Representatives of this House. The one valid excuse for their change of front in this matter, since the time they were parties to repressive legislation, is that they have become converted to the question of a domestic Legislature for Ireland. Lord Spencer on Saturday acknowledged it frankly—he repeated the opinion of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman)—that since he was responsible for the government of Ireland, he had been converted and had found salvation. They have discovered that the true method to govern Ireland is not to arm the law or to arm the Judges with powers for contending against the intimidation practised by the Nationa League, but to make such changes in the government of Ireland as will place the Judges and the law practically in the hands and under the control of the National League. Having been converted to those doctrines, of course, it is perfectly reasonable and rational that my hon. Friends should now be opposed to anything in the shape of exceptional or repressive legislation. That is sufficient excuse for them; but it is not a sufficient reason for us, who have not yet been converted, and that is not a sufficient reason for the majority of the House, or for the majority of the people of this country, who, at the last General Election, unequivocally declared that they were not prepared to assent to changes in the government of Ireland which would have had the consequences which I have described. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian relies very much in this matter on precedent. Notwithstanding his conversion to Home Rule, I understood my right hon. Friend to say that if a case had been made out—if a sufficient number of outrages could have been proved to exist—if a case similar to previous cases had been made for the introduction of similar Bills which had been brought forward, then, notwithstanding his conversion, he would not have opposed the introduction of this Bill.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I did not say a word about it.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I understood his words to be that there was a difference in the case made for the introduction of this Bill and that made by former Governments for the introduction of similar Bills. I infer from his line of argument that, if a similar case could have been made in respect to the number of agrarian outrages, my right hon. Friend would have been disposed to have regarded this Bill in a different way from what he has done. Stress has been laid upon the absence of ordinary crime in Ireland. My right hon. Friend (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), I think, referred to that subject. The hon. and learned Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) referred to the absence of ordinary crime in Ireland, but my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian has on former occasions—in 1881—dealt fully with that part of the question; and he has pointed out that any comparison between agrarian and ordinary crime is absolutely fallacious and misleading. My right hon. Friend said—

> "But what is the case with agrarian crime? We must carefully sever this class of crime from ordinary crime. It is fatal to all true investigation of the case if we allow ourselves to mix them. What is ordinary crime? Ordinary crime is due sometimes to momentary passion; often to weakness and inability to resist temptation, and sometimes to hardened depravity. But in all cases where it occurs it is at once recognized as the foe of society, and society arms itself by a natural instinct to discountenance it and to put it down. An ordinary crime means the thing that it is, and means nothing more; but when you come to agrarian crime how different it is! Agrarian crime is the expression of the will, tendency, and determination not of one, but of many. It is not only a single occurrence; it is a symbol, and a reproduction of that occurrence in every similar case where a similar provocation exists, and that provocation may consist either in the exercise of private rights or in the discharge of private duties. Agrarian crime is, above all things, important in its character as a symbol; in its character as a menace, and in the indications that it gives, and, unhappily, in the support that it receives."—(3 *Hansard*, [257] 1698-9.)

The observations of the right hon. Gentleman seem to me to show that the existence of agrarian crime is a matter which is to be taken into account in considering legislation such as this which is proposed, irrespective of the amount, number, and character of the agrarian crime. If in any part of the country agrarian crime exists to any considerable extent, then I maintain the observations I have quoted from my right hon. Friend hold good, and that he must consider it not only from the point of view of their amount, but from the point of view of that of which they are the symbol and which they represent. My right hon. Friend said that the proportion of convictions to agrarian crimes was one in 33; that when 33 persons were tried, one was brought to punishment, and 32 walked away with impunity. The hon. Member for Sligo pointed out that there was not a larger number of agrarian crimes than formerly existed, but if any hon. Member will look at the Returns on the Table of the House, he will see that in the Province of Munster the number of convictions in proportion to offences is not one in 33, but one in 35; so that the very indication which my right hon. Friend behind me pointed to as one of the reasons which made repressive legislation in 1881 necessary holds good in the Province of Munster at the present moment. But this is a question which cannot be decided by precedents; it is not a question which we can decide by what has been done on former occasions by one Party or another. It is a question we must look at for ourselves. The question we have to look at, and what we have to decide, is this—Does there exist in Ireland, or in a considerable portion of Ireland, a condition of illegality, a condition of things under which the law of the land does not prevail? What is the system, what is the code, what are the judges, and what are the laws, which have superseded the ordinary law of the land? A further question has, however, been raised. It being granted that there exists in Ireland a condition of illegality, it has been asserted that the operation of the law in Ireland is so unjust that resistance, passive or even overt, is morally justified. We have heard in the course of this debate incitements, or what may be termed incitements, to insurrection and crime. The hon. Member for East Mayo said that if the people were willing to follow he would be prepared to lead them to insurrection; and the hon. Gentleman the senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) suggested that before the Government pass this Bill the people ought to fight in the streets. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, in language more measured and deliberate, appears to have gone even beyond these hon. Gentlemen. In the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman there exists not a contingent but an immediate case for resistance. He says he disapproves of the Plan of Campaign as irregular and improper; but he has spoken of the Plan of Campaign in reference to other proceedings which were also illegal, such as the refusal of Hampden to pay ship-money, the landing of William III. at Torbay, and the throwing of the tea into Boston Harbour. He has compared the Plan of Campaign with events which many of us—the majority of us—believe to have been revolutionary yet morally justified. Therefore it seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman, by his reference to these past events, is practically justifying forcible and revolutionary resistance to the law which exists in Ireland. It is extremely difficult for us in this House to argue calmly with our opponents who avow that there is a moral justification for defiance of the law. I believe we are here in these Houses of Parliament to amend the law if necessary, but to support the Government in the enforcement of the law. We are not here for the purpose of preaching or condoning resistance to the law, either passive or overt. What are the circumstances which, in the opinion of my right hon. Friend, justify such resistance to the law? The laws which prevail in Ireland are the same laws which prevail in England, with the exception of the agrarian laws, which have in recent years been rendered far more favourable to the interests of the tenant than in any other part of the United Kingdom. What are these agrarian laws which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby considers and describes morally justify rebellion, and which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. John Morley) has described as inflicting more evils and causing more injury upon Ireland than the penal laws of the last century? These very laws are the work of a Government of which my right hon. Friends sitting on this Bench were Members. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian is very fond of appealing to the judgment of the civilized world. What is the case upon which they are going to the civilized world to justify open or passive resistance to the law? The case for which they are going to the civilized world is this. Five years ago we passed what was described as a great and beneficent Act; it was passed by the greatest statesman of the age; it was passed with his assurance that walking in the light of justice we could not err. It is now asserted, on the authority of the Royal Commission, that the grants fixed under this beneficent Act are 16 or 17 per cent too high. The wicked Conservative Government, supported by the still more wicked Liberal Unionists, refuse summarily to disturb and alter this beneficent settlement of five years ago, and immediately, according to the contention of my right hon. Friends who sit near me, a case has arisen, not merely for the alteration of the law, but for rebellion, for armed resistance and defiance of the law. I do not think that this is a case with which my hon. and right hon. Friends will be very successful when they go to the civilized world. I deny that it has been conclusively proved that the Act of 1881 has not given protection, and adequate protection, to tenants; but if it has not, I contend that it has not had a fair trial, not from the action of the Government or landlords of Ireland, but from the action of the National League. The rent-fixing clauses of the Land Act of 1881 were not the whole of the Act. Of equal, I think of quite equal, importance—as Lord Lansdowne has pointed out in a paper he laid before the Royal Commission—are the clauses regarding free sale, and if free sale had been allowed, free sale would have been a test of the equity of the decisions of the Land Court of the conditions as to rent. But free sale was expected to do a great deal more. It would have afforded the means of a peaceful settlement of the vast majority of cases between landlords and tenants, and have afforded the means by which the extreme penalty of evictions would have been avoided. What has been the action of the National League with regard to free sale? It has been precisely what might have been anticipated from men whose object was not the protection of the tenant, but the destruction and ruin of landlords, who desired not to protect the tenant, but to deprive the landlord of all his interest in the land of Ireland, and get rid of landlords because the landlords were the obstacle to the desires of the National League for the self-government of Ireland. It has been asserted by the Royal Commission, and abundantly proved by evidence taken before it, that, generally speaking, in all cases where free sale has been attempted to be resorted to for the purpose of accomplishing an arrangement between landlords and tenants, it had been put a stop to, and limited by, the action of the National League. It is said that the case for this Bill has not been made out. I say, in my judgment, that the case which justifies resistance to the law has not been made out. Then the question only remains, does a state of illegality prevail in Ireland? The charges of the Judges which have been quoted—and they have been quoted on former occasions by Gentlemen on this side of the House for precisely the same purpose — the evidence taken before the Royal Commission, and the resolutions of the National League which have recently been published, amply prove, in my judgment, that a condition of illegality does prevail in Ireland. What is proved is the existence of the influence and domination, not of a voluntary organization for the protection of the tenants' interests, as it has sometimes been represented to be, but of an illegal combination that acts by violent means, making its own laws, setting up its own tribunals, and enforcing its decrees by means of intimidation and violence. This association arrogates to itself the right of deciding whether a man shall pay his rent, and how much of it he shall pay. It also undertakes to decide on the conditions on which a man may take, or may not take, a farm; on the conditions on which a man may give or may take employment, or from whom he may take it; on the conditions on which a man may deal or may not deal with another; on the conditions on which a man may speak to another or is bound to avoid another; on the conditions under which he may exercise the right of voting; and also on the relations which he is to hold with the priest of his own religion. It may be said that these are mere expressions of public opinion—mere warnings that a particular course of conduct will bring reprobation on the offender. It may be said that the only sanction by which these conditions are enforced is the threat of expulsion from the National League, and that the League, being a voluntary body, it is perfectly competent for them to say who is and who is not to remain a member of that body. But the evidence that we have before us shows that these resolutions are something more than this. It shows that they are not mere warnings that the transgressor will be held up to public reprobation; they are sentences which are passed on individuals—sentences of excommunication enforced by penalties of a like description on all who work for him, all who deal with him, all who provide him even with necessaries, all who speak to him in the market-place or on the road. Sometimes an attempt is made to compare the intimidation practised by the National League with the form of exclusive dealing practised in this country by trade unions, or with the forms of political intimidation which are said to be common in some parts of this country. I maintain that no comparison whatever can be made between these forms of exclusive dealing or political intimidation and the intimidation of the National League. It is one thing, and I think it very objectionable, that a political partizan should deal with his own political friends only, rather than with his opponents also; but it is altogether a different thing to place under a sentence of excommunication every individual who refuses to do the same. It is a very objectionable thing that a man should be removed from his farm, or from his employment, simply for political reasons; but it is a very different thing if the man so excluded is placed under the ban of social excommunication, and under such penalties as that by the National League he should be prohibited from taking a farm, or, if a labourer, should be deprived of employment. It cannot for a moment be maintained that intimidation or exclusive dealing is ever in this country carried to an extent in the slightest degree comparable to that which is abundantly proved to exist in Ireland. Sometimes we hear it said that intimidation is practised by the Primrose League; but if you could conceive of such an association laying down edicts that a man who came under its discipline should be incapable of taking a farm, incapable of being employed, incapable of being dealt with, incapable of being spoken to, I think we know what the feeling of the country would be. If public opinion was not strong enough to put intimidation of that kind down—if the existing law was not strong enough, there would be an immediate demand on the part of the country and of Parliament to strengthen the law to whatever extent might be necessary to put an end to intimidation of that character. It may be said that, bad as all this is—bad as is all this intimidation—it is better than the practices which have been resorted to formerly, and which may be resorted to again, by secret societies carrying on intimidation by means of violence, crime, and murder. I do not deny that it is possible that at first, when the power of the National League may find itself resisted, we may again have some of these secret societies resorting to violent crime and outrage. But I believe that the Crimes Act of 1882, although it was not found sufficient to cope with intimidation, was found sufficiently effective in regard to the more violent forms of crime and outrage. I believe that this Bill will be found equally effective for that purpose. I do not believe that the Government of this country, resting, as it does, on the confidence of a Parliament freely elected by the people, is going to be permanently paralyzed by the machinations of any secret societies practising violence, intimidation, and outrage. But, Sir, if it be otherwise—if we are so weak, so powerless—if we are fallen so low that we are going to be reduced to submission by the existence and by the proceedings of secret societies resorting to violent forms of outrage, well, then, Sir, nothing in my opinion remains for us but to confess our helplessness and impotence. It would be only adding hypocrisy to cowardice [if we were to refrain from opposing these secret societies under the plea that they represent the real opinion of, and are necessary for the protection of the Irish people. Sir, in my opinion the question that we are to decide on the second reading of this Bill is one of the greatest gravity. I believe that if anything was clearly established at the late General Election it was that Ireland was to be governed by the law, the ordinary law, and the law of Parliament, and was not to be governed by the law of the National League. If there was anything clearly expressed by the people of the country at the last Election it was that it was not prepared to trust the control of the Government of Ireland to the men who control the proceedings of the National League. If that was, as I believe, the decision of the country at the last Election, then it appears to me still more clear that the country which was not willing to trust the leaders of the National League with those powers, coupled with responsibility, would be still less willing to allow them to retain those powers when unaccompanied by any responsibility whatever. For these reasons, Sir, I shall vote against the Amendment.

Mr. ASHER (Elgin, &c.) said, he did not propose to deal with the general questions involved in the debate, but rather to discuss one particular ground on which the Bill had been justified—namely, that the greater part of its provisions had been borrowed from the Scottish law. Perhaps the most conspicuous instances of such statements were to be found in the recent speeches of his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) and his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay), in the course of the pilgrimage they had pursued in Scotland last week for the purpose of converting the Scottish people. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham, speaking at Ayr, said he had been assured by those who knew something of the Scotch law, that there was very little in that measure which was not contained in the Law of Scotland; and the hon. and learned Member for Inverness, speaking in Glasgow, said that the provisions of that Bill as to criminal procedure were largely drawn from the existing law in Scotland; and, addressing that House the other day, his hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) also spoke in a similar sense, although in much more guarded terms. He (Mr. Asher) hoped, however, to satisfy the House that, in reality, there was very little resemblance between the provisions of the present Bill and the provisions of the Criminal Law in Scotland. The system which, at present, prevailed in Scotland was, in many respects, an admirable system. On the one hand, it protected the Constitutional rights and liberties of the people; and, on the other hand, it secured the conviction of crime. It was not the creation of any particular statutes, but was the product of time and circumstances. It had grown up very much like the British Constitution. Accordingly, it had been adapted from time to time to the changing conditions of society and the varying necessities of social wants. It had, however, many anomalies, which, if it were proposed to import the system wholesale into another country, it would be extremely difficult to justify. But the foundation upon which the system rested, without which its successful operation could not possibly be maintained, was that it commanded the confidence and approval of the Scottish people. The central feature of the system was, that there was vested in the Lord Advocate, as Public Prosecutor, the power of instituting, regulating, and controlling criminal prosecutions. That power was not exclusive, but belonged also to private individuals, and, probably, no better tribute could be paid to the manner in which the system was administered than the fact that though it was competent for a private citizen to prosecute, such a thing was practically unknown in recent times. The holder of the Office of Lord Advocate had always been an eminent lawyer—a public officer amenable to public opinion; and it was notorious that the duties of the Office had invariably been discharged with a moderation and impartiality that had secured the general confidence of the people. If these qualities and that confidence were absent from the administration of the Office, then it was impossible that the present system could be maintained. Had they the slightest hope or expectation that when this Bill passed, its administration in Ireland would inspire anything in the nature of the confidence which he had described? His hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) had told them that the Bill, in substance, meant to say—"one of us two must rule, the other must obey, and we mean to rule." He agreed with his hon. and learned Friend that that was the message of defiance to the Irish people which was to be found in the Bill. His hon. and learned Friend would, no doubt, some day, become himself chiefly responsible for the administration of the Criminal Law in Scotland; and he (Mr. Asher) was sure that every Scotsman who heard him would agree that if the Criminal Law of Scotland were administered by his hon. and learned Friend in the spirit of the message to which he had referred—which, he believed, it would never be—the system would crumble to pieces in his hands. The particular points of supposed resemblance between the proposals of the Bill and the system of Scottish law were the power of preliminary examination on oath when no one was under charge, the power of summary jurisdiction to be conferred on the magistrates, and the power of changing the place of trial. A statement of that description was one of those half truths which was highly calculated to be misleading, unless the circumstances were thoroughly and fully understood. With regard to the first of these points, the power of preliminary examination on oath, it was true that, according to the letter of the Scotch law, such a power existed, and could be exercised by the Procurator Fiscal, in conjunction with the Sheriff of the county, subject to the direction of the Lord Advocate. His hon. and learned Friend referred to the commentaries of Baron Hume, a work, no doubt, of high authority, as the foundation of Scottish Criminal Jurisprudence; but it was none the less true that many things were stated by that learned writer which were of common occurrence at the time the commentaries were written, but which, under the changes of time, of manners, and of ideas, had ceased to have any material application to the present day. The power of preliminary examination on oath was practically in abeyance, and during his professional experience, in so far as he remembered, it had never been put into operation. The uniform practice in Scotland was, for the Procurator Fiscal, on behalf of the Crown, to collect the evidence in regard to any crime which had been committed, by receiving and noting down the statements of the witnesses voluntarily made. During the period when his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour) and himself were Law Officers for Scotland, they never thought of putting into operation this relic of the past. Even historically, the Scotch practice, with regard to this matter, was not analogous to the proposal in the present Bill. It was a proceeding which never had been used except on rare and exceptional occasions, and then only with reference to special and isolated cases of grave and serious crimes. Further, the examination was conducted before the Sheriff, who was a trained lawyer and experienced Judge, and whose duty it was to prevent in the course of the examination any invasion of what was a first principle of Scottish law—that no man was bound on oath to criminate himself. Between the Scottish procedure and the procedure that the Bill would create there was, in fact, hardly any analogy, and it never entered into his imagination that the Scotch criminal system could be relied upon as a justification for this Bill. Indeed, the suggestion that this part of the Bill found a parallel in the Scottish system was misleading as to be utterly unjustifiable as a weapon to use in that debate. Under the Bill it was proposed to make the power of preliminary examination on oath applicable not only to any felony or misdemeanour, but to anything and everything which was declared to be an offence against the Act. Were the Government going to use this power of preliminary investigation upon oath for the purpose of discovering what members of the Irish nation were implicated in Boycotting? If they were, they were asking a power to establish a Court of Inquisition, through which masses of the Irish people would be compelled to pass, and undergo examination on oath, for the purpose of extracting from them statements to aid the Executive to convict them of offences against the act. He declared that a Bill of that character would, in his judgment, be a serious invasion of the rights and liberties of a free people. With regard to summary jurisdiction, it was true they had that in Scotland; but it was a very different thing from the proposal in the Bill. It was applicable only to cases of the nature of petty police offences, such as small thefts and simple assaults, or breaches of the peace; cases belonging to well-defined and familiar classes of crime, the disposal of which did not involve any questions of serious difficulty. Besides, in Scotland the summary jurisdiction was exercised by the Sheriffs, who were properly trained and qualified Judges, whose duties were not limited to their criminal jurisdiction, and who were daily engaged in hearing and deciding civil suits, which might, and often did, involve interests of great value. Even as exercised by a Judge in that position, the limit of punishment, on conviction by summary trial, was imprisonment for 60 days. He maintained that a system of that nature was wholly different from that proposed to be established by the Bill. Under it two Resident Magistrates would have power, in a proclaimed district, to try in a summary form any offence punishable under the Act. Many of these offences were of the most shadowy and delicate description. His hon. and learned Friend opposite had challenged any lawyer to say that there was any new crime under the Bill. Speaking as a Scottish lawyer, he was of opinion that many of the offences punishable under the Act were not crimes by the Law of Scotland. He would take one illustration. He was glad to see the two Law Officers for Scotland in their places. Were they of opinion that it would be a relevant statement of a crime by the Law of Scotland to say that A and B had criminally conspired to induce C not to hire a piece of land or not to deal with a particular tradesman? He was glad to find that his hon. and learned Friends opposite agreed with him that it would not. But by the 2nd clause of the Bill that would be an offence against the Act. His answer, therefore, to the challenge of his hon. and learned Friend was that under that clause, if the Law of England and Scotland were the same, there was a new crime. A conspiracy was in itself merely an agreement. It did not become a crime by the mere prefix of the adjective "criminal," but by the quality of the acts which the persons conspired or agreed to do. But under this Bill a conspiracy was declared to be criminal, although the quality of the acts which formed the subject of conspiracy was not such as to give it a criminal character. He would not detain the House with further illustrations. But who was to decide the delicate and difficult questions which would arise under the Conspiracy and Intimidation Clauses? The magistrates in Ireland, they had been told, were largely selected from among half-pay officers of the Army. Did they seriously propose to leave it to a half-pay officer to decide whether an act not criminal in itself would, if done by two persons, become criminal in respect of the circumstances under which it was done. Was that a safe power to put into the hands of any magistrates, especially such as were to be found in Ireland, especially when combined with a power of imprisonment for six months. The only appropriate tribunal for such cases would be a jury and a trained Judge. He would again repeat that there was no similarity between the Bill which conferred those powers and the legal system of Scotland, for an infinite variety of offences were being set up by the Bill of a novel and anomalous character altogether unsuitable for being disposed of by summary jurisdiction. The third point on which it was sought to justify the Bill by the Scottish system, was the change of venue—a valuable part of the Scottish law; but the circumstances of Scotland were very different from those which prevailed in Ireland. In Scotland, happily, they were free from the personal, political, and religious animosities which were associated in Ireland with particular localities; and he could well imagine how the change of venue, combined with the power of limiting the panel to special jurors, and what he must call the startling practice of the Crown to make jurors stand aside in such numbers as practically to select the panel—should create a measure of apprehension on the part of many people in Ireland. But all these proposals to which he had referred sank into insignificance compared with that providing for the transfer of accused persons from Ireland over to England for trial. In that there was no similarity to the Law of Scotland; for, in the Scottish law, there was no power in any way analagous to that most anomalous and startling proposal. He could not conceive anything more calculated to shock the sentiment and national feeling of the people. The hon. and learned Member for Inverness, who was a warm supporter of the Bill, was especially delighted with the provision which made it applicable to Ireland for ever; but he had not sufficient boldness to attempt to justify before a Scottish audience the proposal to change the place of trial to England. His hon. and learned Friend stood pledged to the Scottish people by his recent speech at Glasgow to oppose the Bill unless that clause was omitted. As his hon. and learned Friend represented the Dissentient Liberals, he (Mr. Asher) would be curious to see whether, before voting for the second reading, his hon. and learned Friend would exact a pledge from the Government to that effect; or was the Government, in order to secure the Liberal Unionist support, going to give up what the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) described as a portion of the Bill which was essential to secure a fair trial for offences of a grave character. But his objections to the Bill were not limited to the details to which he had referred. If the Bill were, in all respects, a reproduction of the Scotch criminal system, he should think it a bad Bill; because he agreed with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) that it mattered little whether the demand was for small or great powers, when those powers came under the name of coercion—exceptional and peculiar legislation. It was not only a message of defiance to the Irish people, but a message of political defiance. If it passed, it would be by the united forces of the Tory and Dissentient Liberal Party, and against the united voice of the Liberal Party. There was one objection to the Bill which, in his opinion, was fatal. It aimed at accomplishing the impossible. By an alteration in the Criminal Law, the Government was going to endeavour to govern the Irish people, according to the principles of representative government, against the wishes of five-sixths of the people, as expressed through their Constitutionally-elected Representatives. That was a policy which could not succeed. The effect of the present measure, if it failed, as it was certain to do, would not be merely negative; it would aggravate instead of curing the evils. Did the Government imagine that such a Bill could ever bring the people of Ireland into sympathy with the law, or establish proper relations between Ireland and this country? He yielded to no one in his opinion of the necessity for the maintenance of the Union; but he believed the Bill would be one of the most deadly blows at the Union delivered in modern times. It was because he wished to see the Union maintained, and made a real, substantial, brotherly union, that he offered his strenuous resistance to the passing of the Bill.

CAPTAIN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow) said, he had been placed in a position which rendered it impossible for him to give a silent vote, owing to the right hon. Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne (Mr. John Morley), on the 6th instant, speaking at the Victoria Hall, having singled him out as an example of a Member who had deceived—that, at least, was the implication—his constituents. The right hon. Member used these words—

> "A gentleman wrote to me yesterday from Bromley-by-Bow, and he said—'I have just passed a placard that still remains on a beer-house opposite my office to this effect—Vote for Colomb and No Coercion.'"

That statement had furnished the peroration for more than one speech in the House, and a heading for 10 or 12 leading articles, which he (Captain Colomb) had in his possession, and treated with deserved contempt. He was, of course, responsible for his acts to his constituents, and was not in the least afraid that any observations from the right hon. Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne would persuade them that, in voting for the Bill, he (Captain Colomb) was voting in any way different from what he had plainly and distinctly promised. ["Oh, oh!"] He had never expressed any other opinion than that criminals must be coerced; and in voting for the second reading, he would vote according to his conscience, and according to that which he had uttered before his constituents. He did not speak of Ireland from book knowledge, or from information acquired through the newspapers; but he claimed to have as good a knowledge of, at least a part of Ireland as anyone in that House. Whatever an enthusiastic supporter might have done printing and posting placards, no man was ever returned because of a placard; but, because of his own speeches, the answers given to questions, and the opportunities which the constituency had of understanding his real opinions. He referred hon. Members to various passages from his Election addresses and speeches both in 1885 and 1886 which went to show that he was perfectly consistent throughout, and he would add that it was perfectly notorious that he had never, on any single occasion expressed any other opinion than that we must coerce criminals and criminal conspiracies in Ireland. No hon. Gentlemen, therefore, could say that he was inconsistent in voting for this Bill to-night. So much for his position, a position which he was proud to hold; because, in voting for this Bill, he was voting according to his conscience and to the statements he had made to his constituents. He would not follow the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down (Mr. Asher) into the intricacies of Scottish jurisprudence; but in one part of his speech he said the Scottish law had been a process of developments, and had been built up by improvements and amendments; but, in his opinion, that was simply an argument in favour of doing what they were now proposing to do—amend the law of Ireland. He deprecated the practice of right hon. Gentlemen who had once held Office, of speaking of the Bill, not by its proper name, but by a nickname. With his knowledge of Ireland, and holding a middle place between landlord and tenant, he honestly believed the Bill was not a Coercion Bill; but if it were to be spoken of by a nickname, he should prefer to describe it as a Coercion by Foreign Conspiracy (Ireland) Relief Bill. He was going to vote for the Bill because he believed it to be necessary for the prosperity and peace of Ireland, and because he believed it would break the power of the National League by bringing criminals to justice. He knew the case of a man with a wife and young family who, between intemperance and neglect of his business, had run heavily into debt. The rent of his farm was £30 a-year, but he had incurred shop debts to the amount of more than £200, and had borrowed from an adjoining tenant—an industrious, hard-working man — £100 on the security of his land, having agreed to give him grazing for the money. When the man owed five and a-half years' rent he was evicted; but he re-entered into possession, and the unfortunate man who had advanced him the £100 was out of his money, could not graze the land, and dared not take it. As he said—

> "For the sake of my £100, my wife and family, I ought to have my cattle on the land. I never have been paid, because the National League would not allow it. I do not want to die a violent death, and I must wait until the power of the League is broken."

Mr. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) asked whether the National League had taken any action whatever with regard to the farm; and whether it was not true that the Protestant rector of the hon. and gallant Member's own parish was not a Member of the National League?

Dr. Tanner also rose, but——

Mr. SPEAKER, interposing, said: These repeated interruptions are both un-Parliamentary and disorderly.

Dr. Tanner thereupon rose from his place, and, bowing to the Chair, left the House.

Captain COLOMB said, he was not speaking of the parish to which he belonged, but of a parish elsewhere. He contended that there was plenty of evidence, which it was not possible to get into a Parliamentary Paper, to justify the Government in asking the House to pass this Bill. That evidence had induced him to say before his constituents not "No Coercion," but "coerce criminals and criminal conspiracies." In voting for the Bill he was not voting in favour of an attack on any purely political organization, but rather for a measure which would bring criminals to justice. When hon. Members of that House spoke of the disgraceful state of Kerry it should be remembered that it was only North Kerry, and not the whole county, that was in such a deplorable condition. In North Kerry the land was good; but in the South, where he (Captain Colomb) lived, there was a wild and mountainous district, with a large population struggling to live on patches of land and in great difficulties. North Kerry was disturbed; it was in a state of anarchy. But he was happy to say that South Kerry was the quietest part of Ireland. [MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON: No evictions?] There had been evictions there; but none of the big guns of the National League had visited the district. What Ireland wanted most was a cultivated soil, encouragement of her industries, and to look more to herself and less to politics. In his conscience he believed that the National League and the Nationalist Party in Ireland were very glad that the Bill had been introduced, and that their opposition against what was called coercion was fictitious, and was got up for dramatic and political purposes. The Land League had raised the devil, and the National League could not lay it. They had proclaimed their satisfaction at having forced the Government to rely upon coercion. The position of the peasantry of Ireland at the present moment was that of partridges with a hawk hovering over them, inasmuch as they were afraid of giving information when they had been subjected to outrage. The Bill had for its object the abolition of illegal coercion, and was a Coercion Bill only in the sense applied by General Garfield, when he said that every man must be either a coercionist or a traitor. One of the most melancholy results of the confusion at present existing in Ireland was that the Irish Members could not be regarded as representing the best qualities of the Irish race, and he must candidly confess he should like to see the Irish Representative Body in that House very much improved. The right hon. Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne had objected to the expression that a conspiracy existed on a foreign soil; but he should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he regarded P. J. Sheridan, Patrick Ford, Brennan, and Egan as being conspirators or not? The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) had said that when he was in America a gentleman had given him 25 dollars at the railway station, with the remark—"There are 5 dollars for bread and 20 dollars for lead." Was the man who gave those 25 dollars a conspirator in the eyes of the right hon. Member or not? From whence did the Irish Nationalist movement obtain its funds? The hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin had asserted that, "since its establishment the National League had not got, and had not used, £4,000 of American money."

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON said, he wished to explain that what he had said was—that, since its inception down to the time at which he had been speaking, the National League had only used £4,000 of American money. He believed that since that time they had received an additional £5,000 from America.

CAPTAIN COLOMB said, that he was quoting from the report of the hon. Member's observations which had appeared in *The Times* newspaper. Seeing that there was a considerable difference of opinion as to the amount of American money which had been received by the National League, he thought the matter had better be cleared up. The amounts which had been acknowledged in the Nationalist organs as having been received from America were—from 1879 to 1882, £147,553; in the year 1883, £10,822; 1884, £4,081; from January to June, 1885, £2,000; from July to December, 1885, £20,948; from January to June, 1886, £36,938; and from June to September, 1886, £32,555; making a total received from America, from 1883 to the end of 1886, of £107,345. Thus, the Land League and the National League had received between them, from America, since 1879, a sum of more than £250,000. But, on the other hand, the Nationalist Party largely bled the Irish people for personal rewards and assistance. The following were the details of subscriptions received from Ireland for special funds as distinguished from central funds:—The Relief of Distress Fund, 1879-80, £942; Fair Trial Fund, 1879, £1,024; Parnell Defence Fund, 1880-1, £19,129; Dr. Kenny and

Father Sheehy Testimonials, 1882-3, £2,500; Evicted Tenants Fund, 1882-3, £8,500; and Parnell Testimonial, 1883, £33,808. To Mr. Gray's Indemnity Fund there was subscribed £500; Mr. W. O'Brien's Fund, £6,200; Testimonials to Messrs. Lalor, A. O'Connor, O'Kelly, Sexton, Harrington, and others, to defray their expenses in Parliament, 1882-5, £5,363; Expenses of Meetings, Law Costs from October, 1882, to June, 1886, another £80,000; Loss on Dublin Exhibition, £25,000; Irish Parliamentary Fund to September last, £6,592. With these and other sums it came to this—that there was not £10,000 spent on the relief of distress or evicted tenants, while £260,000 was dragged out of the pockets of the Irish people as refreshers for patriots; and that out of £324,151 received from America, not £60,000 went for the relief of tenants or distress. ["Hear, hear!" *from the Home Rule Members.*] These were very remarkable figures—[*Ironical cheers*]—and he was glad to find they were so amply corroborated by those cheers from below the Gangway. When they spoke of the Irish in America they must not forget the nature of the Oath of Allegiance which they had taken in becoming citizens of the States. So-and-so—

> "Declares on oath absolutely and entirely to renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to every Foreign Prince, Potentate, State, and Sovereignty whatever, and particularly Queen Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

That was a factor in this question. The Irish in America had taken that oath, and the agitators among them were in the minority, yet they must regard them not as under the dominion of, or friendly to, this Parliament, but as its sworn enemies. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle had quoted certain evidence taken before the Commission, showing the great improvement that had taken place in the last 30 or 40 years in the material comfort and prosperity of the Irish people; but the facts so quoted only proved the marvellous progress that had been made since the Union, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) now wished to disturb. He could only say, in conclusion, that he was for the Bill; because he believed it to be necessary, in order, in the words of William Penn, to give justice its impartial course, and the law free passage.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Mr. Speaker, I confess that there were some parts of the speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just sat down (Captain Colomb) which I did not find particularly intelligible. On the whole, I thought it exhibited an edifying example of the manner in which, without the slightest form of scruple, Gentlemen can pursue in this House a course with respect to a measure of this importance in diametrical contradiction to what all the world understood to be their professions at the General Election. The hon. Gentleman is very much astonished, and apparently delighted, on finding that within a certain course of years, which he stated, the contributions from America to the national cause of Ireland have reached £250,000. The future, however, is likely to find for him a still greater store of satisfaction when, if this controversy should unhappily be continued for another course of years, the contributions of America will far and far exceed that sum, and for this reason —that, if I rightly understand the facts of the case, on this occasion, for the first time, their political contributions—I do not speak of the humane contributions which reflect so splendid a light upon previous efforts in America. [*Laughter from the Ministerial Benches.*] Well, Sir, I am ashamed—I am shocked to hear hon. Gentlemen opposite laugh, seeing that America contributes to our famines, and contributes to the rents of our landlords. Hon. Gentlemen scoff at the reference to these facts. Painful enough they are, because they bring to our minds the need which calls forth such contributions, but which are honourable and glorious. This is the first occasion on which, so far as political contributions are concerned, the movement in America has assumed a national character. That is an undoubted fact. Gentlemen have only to acquaint themselves with the communications that come from America, and they will not only find that people assemble in those enormous meetings, which are the customary expressions of national sentiment in that country, but that those meetings are gathered together under the auspices and the presidency of the most distinguished men in that country, who hold responsible offices from one end of the land to another. Sir, I quit the speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and I wish to say something on a subject which has been repeatedly handled in the course of this debate without, I think, being exhausted, and that is the subject of the supposed inconsistency in which I, myself, or others who may think or act in the same sense, are involved—I mean the supporters of Coercion Bills on former occasions. Now, Sir, some hon. Gentlemen opposite take a great delight in pointing out that the majority of Coercion Bills have been proposed by Liberal Governments. But Liberal Governments have been in Office for a much longer period during the last century than Governments formed by the Party opposite, and that may go some way towards accounting for the fact. But I do not look at that multitude of Bills—all of them, more or less, involving a deviation from the ordinary law—which may have been placed on the Statute Book. I look at what may be called the great Coercion Bills. The great Coercion Bills, in my opinion, are five—the Bill of 1833, the Bill of 1846, the Bill of 1881, the Bill of 1882, and the Bill of 1887. Three of those Bills were proposed by Liberal Governments; two of them were the product of Tory Governments. I do not know, therefore, that there is anything in that proportion on which hon. Gentlemen opposite can plume themselves. But I have a better test than the number of Bills proposed; because those Bills, when they have been proposed, have been invariably, until the present year, founded upon an exceptional state of crime, and, therefore, upon circumstances not directly connected, as is presumable, with the particular proceedings of one Government or another. But what has been the feeling displayed in this House upon an occasion when a Coercion Bill was allowed to lapse and the Government of the day were unwilling to renew it? There was a case of that kind in 1885, when the Tory Government was reluctant to renew even a portion of the Crimes Act, but their decision received a genial and kindly welcome from the Liberal Party in this House. In 1880, on the contrary, a Coercion Bill of a milder character, but still a Coercion Bill, had lapsed at the time when the Tory Government left Office. The Liberal Government coming into Office declined to renew the Bill. Hon. Gentlemen opposite recollect with what vituperation and with what invectives they were loaded because they declined to renew it. Now we are told that the Bill of 1882 was a Bill of excessive severity. Aye, and does the House recollect an important incident in the Committee on that Bill? There was a most important and stringent clause—I think the clause referring to searches at night—with respect to which Lord Spencer, acting in the strictly conscientious manner which governed all his proceedings, had announced that it might be dispensed with. The Government proposed to strike that clause out of the Bill. The Tory Opposition would not hear of it, and by their votes, aided, I admit, by an insignificant handful of, perhaps, 20 or 30 Liberals, the clause was retained in the Bill. Well, Sir, what sort of indication does such an occurrence give of the view taken of coercion by a great political Party? Who are the persons responsible for proposing a Bill? The Executive Government. What is the duty of the House of Commons with respect to such a Bill? To examine it jealously, to refuse it if they can, to cut it down if they can, but to take care that in no circumstance it goes beyond the necessity of the case, which necessity of the case they take from the mouth of the Executive Government. There was an instance—I believe unexampled in our history—when the Executive Government, desiring to make an important remission of the demands which they had made for coercion upon a further consideration of the circumstances, were prevented by the Tory Party from making that remission; and part of the Coercion Bill of 1882 was the work of the Tory Opposition, contrary to the wishes of the Executive. I am not ready to admit so much as some may, perhaps, be disposed to allow with regard to the inconsistency of our proceedings. I am not now speaking of the whole of the proceedings with regard to coercion. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James), in a recent speech, censured the Bill of 1881 for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. I am not at all disposed to find fault with him for that sentiment. I am not speaking of the details of coercion, but I want to know what other course was open to us in the state of things that then existed? The Act of Union—brought about by means I will not now describe, but which was a stain upon the history and the good name of this country—the Act of Union, however gross the error in policy which was committed by its enactment, was a vast Constitutional settlement, and introduced a vast Constitutional change; and when that change had been made it was impossible, in my opinion—it was not warrantable, at any rate—to dream of disturbing it except upon two conditions—first of all, that the change proposed could be safely effected; and, secondly, that it was Constitutionally demanded by the voice of Ireland. Neither of those conditions was fulfilled at the time when Lord Grey and Lord Althorp and others of the Liberal Party declared against the repeal of the Union. In that state of facts, when there was an exceptional state of crime, when it was flagrant in the country, and the public peace was generally disturbed, I did not, and even now I do not see, what opening there was for a Government like that of Sir Robert Peel, or like that of Lord Grey, but to propose a stringent measure. Therefore, Sir, I do not accept all the censure, nor do I feel all the shame, nor do I feel the great regret which some may think I ought to experience on account of my share in those proceedings. But, Sir, we have not refused the lessons of experience. I believe—and apparently the Tories of 1885 believe—that the Government of Lord Spencer and the Crimes Act of 1882 had tried out to the very last the experiment of coercion. But that stringent Bill, administered with a kind and firm hand, had done all that a Coercion Bill could do. What did it do? It reduced the number of crimes, but it left behind a state of things in which the determination of the people to combine, and in which the estrangement of the people from law were wider spread and more rooted than ever. That is the price you must be prepared to pay for any measure of coercion. Having found that no permanent results could be reached in that course, we should be more consistent in looking to another course, just as a physician, having failed in some particular method, or having insufficiently succeeded in treating a particular disease, varies the means he uses, having always the same end in view. I must observe that on every one of those occasions the voice of the majority of the Representatives of Ireland was in favour of coercive measures. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) has, in this debate, with the advantage of adequate reflection, replied to a speech of mine, and opened upon me his ponderous artillery. The right hon. Gentleman made an appeal to me; he desires me, as an honest man, to admit that the case for the Coercion Bill now before us resembles essentially—is identical essentially with—that of the Bill of 1882.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Your own words; I quote your own words.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The right hon. Gentleman could not have chosen a more unfortunate basis for his appeal. If he had appealed to me as an incorrigible blockhead, it would not possibly be more easy or more practicable for me to make the admission he desires—that a set of circumstances, in all respects opposed, are substantially identical.

MR. CHAPLIN: I quoted your own words.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Did the right hon. Gentleman quote words of mine stating that the cases of 1882 and 1887 were identical?

MR. CHAPLIN: Yes, I did.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I never used any such words.

MR. CHAPLIN: What I said was this—these are the words of the right hon. Gentleman—that the announcement made by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) amounted to this, that they were themselves to substitute an arbitrary standard for the standard as regards rents which they had themselves individually agreed to. As I stated, in making that assertion, the right hon. Gentleman had exactly and literally described what the advocates of the Plan of Campaign recommended.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: That statement referred simply to rent; but rent is not a ground for a Coercion Bill—rent and non-payment of rent—unless there is a breaking up of all society.

What I am now going to quote is, I admit, a matter of opinion, and, therefore, I do not ask the acceptance of this statement from hon. Gentlemen opposite; but I give it as my opinion. Hon. Gentlemen are very fond now of talking about their mandate. In my opinion, the majority of hon. Gentlemen in this House had a mandate at the last Election opposed to coercion. We have heard two cases produced to-night of what, to the common sense of mankind, is a most glaring contradiction between the votes intended to be given and the promises made at the Election. In another case I heard, a night or two ago, a Gentleman rise and say that he had never pledged himself against coercion, and he proved his case by reading from his address the promise he had made that Ireland should be governed, not only by just, but by equal laws. Therefore, I believe this is a House of Commons which, according to expectation and to the opinions which are entertained on this side of the House, is totally different from the Parliament of 1882 in having opinions adverse to the enactment of coercive legislation. There is another very important difference indeed on which I must say a word. In the Parliament of 1880, acting in 1881, about this, at all events, there was no doubt. We had, on the one hand, a Bill of coercion, no doubt, to propose; but we had also a measure of relief. The two stood upon the same footing. Is that the case now? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] I ask whether the measure of relief is a reality or an imposture? [Mr. A. J. Balfour dissented.] I will withdraw that word—an illusion. The right hon. Gentleman said that he would use his best efforts to carry the Irish Land Bill. I have said the same thing myself five, 10, or 20 times over, with perfect sincerity of intention, but with grave doubts in my mind as to the power of giving effect to that intention. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Certainly with respect to measures of secondary consequence; never with respect to a measure of this nature or consequence. It is useless to talk of this mere intention to pass a Bill. Does the Government intend to stand or fall by the Bill? We are told that there are large numbers of hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House—my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington), my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), and others—who have made it an absolute condition of supporting coercion that there should also be relief. Therefore, I want to know whether coercion and relief stand on the same footing now as they stood in 1881; and before we go to a Division this night, I hope and expect that the Government will give us a clear, unequivocal, and unmistakable answer to that question. In 1881 Parliament was nearly a unanimous Parliament, and all those who opposed coercion—I speak, now, in the presence of many of those who opposed it—opposed it, not only as a small minority in this House, but as a decided minority of Irish Members. That, I apprehend, is a most important difference. I come to rent; and the case of rent, in my opinion, is totally different. We have before us the evidence taken before the Commission on Land, and the evidence proves that the demand now made is a demand for moderate abatements. Was that the demand in 1882—according to our view of the case—I will not say now whether we were right or wrong? That is totally irrelevant. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire is challenging me to acknowledge the identity of the circumstance. I must take the circumstances as we measured and received them; and we did believe, and stated in 1881, that the movement, in our opinion, was a movement against rent, against contracts, against debts altogether, and threatened to break up society.

Mr. CHAPLIN: That was not the argument of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: The interruption of the right hon. Gentleman is totally irrelevant. He desires me, as an honest man, to acknowledge the identity of the circumstances, and my answer is that I could only acknowledge it as an incorrigible blockhead. The circumstances, as we measured them, were totally different in 1882 from what they are in 1887.

Mr. CHAPLIN, rising amid cries of "Order!" said: I wish to make an explanation which the right hon. Gentleman allows me to make. The right hon. Gentleman is speaking under a total misapprehension as to what I said in debate on this question. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that there was a fundamental distinction between the circumstances of 1881 and now on this ground—that now there is a movement only against unjust rents, whereas then there was a movement against all rents. I showed, in the course of my observations, that the movement against all rent occurred only after the imprisonment of the hon. Member for Cork, and I quoted the words of the right hon. Gentleman to show that precisely the same thing was done now by the advocates of the Plan of Campaign as that for which he imprisoned the hon. Member for Cork and his friends.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: All through 1881 that is the basis we stood on in all the statements we made.

MR. CHAPLIN: I quoted your own words.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: What are we told now? We have now the universal admission that the combinations in Ireland, which have for their object the reduction of rent and the allowance of reasonable abatements, do not, so to speak, blossom into crime, and that the reason they do not issue into crime is because the organization is so perfect; but the fact stands that they do not issue into crime. Was that the case in 1881? No, Sir; our strong contention was that wherever the Land League went, in our opinion, an increase of crime—a flagrant increase of crime—was the consequence. It is impossible to conceive anything more diametrically opposed to the whole circumstances on which this Bill is framed than that I now come to—namely, the greatest circumstance of all, the condition of Ireland. It has been held that the duty of every Government in these times of proposing Coercion Bills to which reference has been made—it has been the acknowledged duty of every Government to show the state of flagrant crime in Ireland. I will quote an authority on that subject which I think states the case very well. Coercion was defined to mean—

> "The repression by exceptional means of exceptional crime and outrage, and if there were no exceptional crime and outrage there would be no exceptional repressive legislation."

That is the definition which every Government have adhered to down to the present time, when the whole circumstances, under the countenance of my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale, and my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury, are reversed; and the mere fact that a demand is made for coercion seems to carry its own attestation and its own warrant, and astonishment is felt that having adopted the principle of Home Rule we can offer opposition to coercion. My opinion was that for us the choice was made between coercion and Home Rule; but I have known many Gentlemen, and one at any rate—Sir George Trevelyan—has expressed himself with the greatest clearness and ability to this effect—that it is not an option between coercion and Home Rule; we may reject your dangerous or exceptional proposal, and yet we may be the opponents of coercion. We stood on that generally admitted, never contested principle that there must be exceptional crime and outrage to justify coercion, and that if there were no exceptional crime and outrage then there would be no exceptional repressive legislation. I have quoted this definition, and whose definition is it? The definition is contained in a speech made by the most experienced Member of the present Government—the noble Lord the Member for East Leicestershire (Lord John Manners), in the course of a speech delivered in June, 1886, at Hatfield Park. I quote it from *The Scotsman.* The noble Lord laid it down as an essential preliminary condition to exceptional legislation of this kind that there should be an exceptional state of crime. Is it asserted that there is an exceptional state of crime in Ireland at the present time. [*Cries of* "Yes!"] It is asserted that there is an exceptional state of crime. [*Cries of* "Yes!"] I am very sorry to hear that, because I must point out to the House that there is nothing of the kind. Nothing was more transparent than the failure of the efforts of the Government to establish this point. We have, indeed, good ground for complaining that the Government have on this point withheld information from the House. The right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home

Department (Mr. Matthews) have availed themselves of their official position to obtain every little rag of information that could possibly tell in favour of their views; but they have not laid upon the Table of the House the documents from which they quoted; they put the statistics in their speeches, but withheld them from the House. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] The document from which the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General for Ireland quoted is not on the Table. The Returns of crime quoted by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary are not in our hands. It is growing into a system for Members of the Government to make use of information unchecked by public criticism, and withhold it until we have given a decisive vote on a question such as this of momentous importance. The noble Lord the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Lord John Manners) yawns. I envy the noble Lord his state of mind; but I was in hopes that my citation from his speech might have prevented him from doing so, and would have secured for him a minute or two of wakefulness. What is the state of the case as far as we know it? What are the facts before us? How does the case stand with regard to crime in 1885 and crime in 1886? It is alleged that there has been an increase of crime. There has been no increase. There is an increase of some 60 to 100—I do not recollect the exact number—upon the total number of cases reported; but this increase is due, not to an increase in the number of crimes, but to the increase of the number of threatening letters. As to the crimes, they stood in 1885 at 512, and in 1886 at 518. Are threatening letters to be regarded as outrages? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] Then all I can say is, that I myself have been a severe sufferer from hundreds of outrages. The outrages perpetrated on me have all proceeded from those who are sometimes known as the loyal and sometimes as the law-abiding Party. I can go one step further, and say that these outrages on me have proceeded from the quintessence of the law-abiding Party, because they have proceeded from some of the most pious persons in the country. The occasion on which I received more threatening letters than during the whole of my long life, before or since, was during the time of the legislation for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. The select part of the law-abiding Party—the highly devout and religious Party—adopted this method and sent me all these threatening letters either for the purpose of amusing themselves or endeavouring to frighten me. Well, leaving out of account the threatening letters, it appears that there were in 1885 512 offences, and in 1886 518, which, for purposes of comparison, I state to be identical. But there is a fact which ought to be observed—namely, that it might be said that in 1885 crime was greatly reduced, because for eight months of that year the Crimes Act was in force. In 1886 there was no Crimes Act or any special legislation whatever, and yet the amount of crime did not increase, and this under circumstances of pressure caused by agricultural distress so extreme as would not have warranted or excused, but would have accounted for, some not inconsiderable amount of increase of crime. Therefore, I say that the case of the Government has entirely broken down, and that we are now called upon to establish a new principle in regard to coercive legislation. My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale estimated that he gathered that if circumstances were different I might not have objected to this Bill. I have neither said that I would or that I would not. It is not wise to lay down abstract propositions on such subjects; but what I will say is that he, who is the most important supporter of this Bill—for I cannot compare any single Gentleman on the Government Bench in importance with my noble Friend—is going to establish a new principle, a retrogressive principle, with regard to Irish repressive legislation—namely, that we may introduce into the House of Commons and pass such a measure in defiance of the precedents of half-a-century, and without the prevalence of that exceptional crime which the noble Lord opposite declares to be essential in order to justify it. The condition of Ireland is, no doubt, a matter which it is our business to look to when we are discussing a Coercion Bill. In regard to crime, we find that there has not been an increase; but there are some other subjects upon which it is important to obtain information, and which ought to attract our attention. And, first, in regard to the death-rate as it affects the people. In England and in Scotland we have had a happy state of things with regard to the death-rate. Comparing the years 1861 to 1870 with the years 1881 to 1885, England shows a diminution of about 15 per cent in the death-rate; Scotland shows a diminution of about 13 per cent; and there is a gain of British lives in that period of 82,000. What is the case of Ireland, which was to have the full benefits of equal legislation? In Ireland the death-rate has increased by 8 per cent; and while 82,000 British lives have been saved 8,000 Irish lives have been lost in consequence of the increase of the death-rate. I say that such facts as these bearing on the general condition of Ireland cannot be excluded from the view of the House of Commons, when it is called upon to meet a case of this kind without any justification whatever for the increase of crime; and it is well for us to ask how we have succeeded in the stewardship that we undertook at the Union, and what credit the great cardinal facts of the case reflect on the statesmanship of England and on the conduct of the United Parliament. I will quote two or three lines from a very useful volume produced by a distinguished statistician—Mr. Mulhall—and recently published. Proceeding to treat of the state of Ireland, he says at page 114 that—

> "The present Reign has been the most disastrous since that of Queen Elizabeth. The following statistics show:—Died from famine in the Reign of which we are now celebrating the Jubilee—died from famine in Ireland, 1,225,000 persons; evicted in Ireland, 3,668,000 persons; number of emigrants from Ireland, 4,186,000 persons."

The great bulk of these emigrants, of course, have gone to America, and then people are astonished to find that there is sympathy in America for Ireland. The distinguished writer of the book goes on to compute—of course, it is only a computation—that these 4,186,000 emigrants have produced, since they quitted Irish shores, for the benefit of the country to which they went, wealth to the amount of about £665,000,000. That is a very sad and mournful retrospect, which appears to afford some apology for those who have thought it was time to review our position, and consider whether the character of England, as much as the happiness of Ireland, did not absolutely require that we should endeavour to escape from the groove within which we have been confined in order to find some better method of fulfilling the high duties we undertook, and which we undertook in defiance of the national wish of Ireland, and which we are, therefore, bound more sacredly and more affectionately to perform. Now, Sir, I come to the contents of the Bill. I pass over almost all of them with great rapidity. It is a complex Bill. It is impossible but that there should be many points, being those of difficulty and of some obscurity, which must make some demand on the time and patience of the House to discuss them properly. [*Cries of* "No!"] Oh! I quite understand. The fact that this is a Coercion Bill is a sufficient reason, apparently, in some hon. Gentlemen's opinion, for waiving discussion and passing it without examination. As such a measure would never be asked for unless it was necessary, although it is asked for in contempt of what has been invariably considered an essential preliminary condition to the necessity of any such demand, these are what I may call the minor provisions of the Bill; and even with respect to these, especially after the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the late Solicitor General for Scotland (Mr. Asher), some reserves must be made, and I am not at all prepared to make that admission, without further consideration, as to the 1st clause which, undoubtedly, I should have been prepared to make with less instruction on the subject. That, I think, must stand for further consideration. We have a great advantage on this occasion, because we have the Bill in our hands. The verbal accounts we received of the Bill gave no idea whatever of its contents, which were kept back, so that we were left absolutely in the dark on points that were really of importance. I noticed in a former speech two points—which I may call salient points—in the Bill—namely, the provision for the removal of the issue from Ireland to Great Britain, and the provision for the perpetuity of the Bill. As to the provision for the removal of the trial from Ireland to Great Britain, it is not worth opening a fresh discussion; and, therefore, I now pass it by. I do not believe it to be of the essence of the Bill, nor do I believe the perpetuity of the measure to be of its essence, although both of them are subjects of great importance, on which we have much to say, and to both of which it will be my duty to offer a firm and resolute opposition. I do not enter into their merits now, because I do not wish unnecessarily to detain the House, upon whose patience I have already trespassed at considerable length. Then comes the question of the Whiteboy Acts. Now, what we contend for is that the provisions of the Whiteboy Acts, which it is intended to bring within the scope of the Bill, shall be printed and set out in the Bill itself, and be made the subject of enactment. I do not believe that the House has the smallest idea of what they are. To tell me that they are now part of the law is to tell me nothing at all. They are a part of the law if, unhappily, that fact has escaped the vigilence of those whose duty it might be to notice it—they are a part of the law subject, at any rate, to the knowledge of the Judge and the justice of the jury, and here the accused has a defence. But what are we to say with regard to the proposal to place under the jurisdiction of two Resident Magistrates the power of imposing six months' hard labour for posting, circulating, or forwarding in any way any document which directs or requires any person to do or refrain from doing any act? That is one of the provisions under which two Resident Magistrates are to be empowered to inflict six months' hard labour. I say it is our duty to ask, and we must ask and press for having these enactments set out in the Bill that we may know what we are doing. As to the right of public meeting, I believe it is to be virtually suppressed by the Bill. It is to be an offence to meet in any way to the terror of Her Majesty's subjects. Well and good. And who is to judge of the terror? Two Resident Magistrates? The "terror of Her Majesty's subjects" is, then, an arbitrary and indefinite expression to be interpreted by prejudice and ignorance, for nobody can say that prejudice and ignorance are never to be found upon the Bench of Resident Magistrates in Ireland. But even that I do not believe to be the essence of the Bill. We come nearer to its heart when we come to the clause empowering the Lord Lieutenant to put down associations. It is perfectly plain that the Lord Lieutenant, if he agrees—as I presume he does—with the present Government and their supporters, must of course and at once put down what is called the National League, and not only the National League, but every association which promotes among the Irish people those combinations for procuring a reduction of rent which Sir Redvers Buller declares to have been the means through which rent reductions have been effected, and without which they would not have been effected. I think it is a moderate proposition to say that it is not right that under a proclamation of this kind men who are connected with an association like the National League should be deprived of the protection of a Judge and jury, and brought before Resident Magistrates, empowered to pass sentence of six months' imprisonment with hard labour. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has stated, the real essence of the Bill lies in Clause 2. I have already objected to this Bill as a Crimes Bill, and I utterly repel and refuse and repudiate it as a Crimes Bill. This is not a Bill the real object of which is to deal with crimes that are known to exist and known to the law. You may leave out of the Bill everything relating to crimes that are known, and yet it will continue to retain the bulk and pith and heart which makes us so determinedly oppose it—that is, the creation of new crimes. This Parliament, elected for the first time by a fully enfranchised people, is not only asked to pass a Crimes Act, without the fulfilment of the elementary conditions hitherto always attached to such a demand, but it is asked also to pass a Bill extending the category of crimes, and to make things crimes which were never crimes before. What is the heading of the 2nd clause? "Extension of the Summary Jurisdiction." That is a misnomer. There is something more important than the extension of summary jurisdiction in the clause, and that is the creation of new crimes. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby pointed out the other night that the phrase "criminal conspiracy" in the Bill was a phrase of which it was difficult to speak with respect, that the word "criminal" was surplusage, and that the expression was nonsense. [Sir Richard Webster dissented.] The hon. and learned Gentleman the

Attorney General shakes his head. Would he like to hear a man speak of "criminal burglary" or "criminal murder?" No; he would not, for he does not now shake his head. I have consulted law dictionaries and other law books to see what the ground was under my feet, and I find that conspiracy is a misdemeanour, is in itself an offence and crime, and no answer has been made to the protest of my right hon. Friend against the introduction of this word "criminal," which gives a phrase which may fairly be called nonsense. However, what shall we do by passing this clause? In the first place, we shall enact that anybody may be found guilty under the clause who induces anyone else to a non-fulfilment of legal obligations. Now, let me take the case of a man who induces another not to pay his rent. I suppose myself a joint tenant, and I believe myself to be over-rented—that is to say, to be entitled to a reduction of rent in the present depressed state of agriculture. I know what Sir Redvers Buller has said in his evidence; I know what the Commission has recommended; and I know that that Commission was appointed by the Government to bring the matter to an issue. Well, in these circumstances, is it a great offence if I persuade or argue with my brother joint tenants that they ought to decline to pay their rents, and if they agree with me? [Mr. Matthews assented.] The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, I am glad to see, gives a benevolent nod. All the same I make that observation; and certainly when I look at the Land Bill it appears to me that that nod is out of place, because that measure has compassion or compunction for no person under a judicial rent except on one condition, and that is the condition that he shall refuse to pay the rent. If he refuses to pay the rent there immediately come into view all manner of benefits. Sir Robert Walpole once said that the way to the Temple of Honour lay through the Temple of Virtue; and I think the reader of the Government Land Bill may say that the way to Paradise leads through bankruptcy. Under this Bill a man is to be allowed to present a petition to make himself a bankrupt. By going into Court he may procure the benefit of a reduction of rent, provided only that he is made a bankrupt first. He may take the benefit of the arrangement for as long as it lasts, and before it expires he may go into Court and be made bankrupt again, procure renewed benefits, and so *toties quoties.* I will not undertake to define what lawyers are somewhat puzzled about, as I understand—that is, the precise amount and limitation of these benefits. All I know is that they are exceedingly attractive, and that they may very well induce a man—a joint tenant—in Ireland to persuade another joint tenant not to pay rent. But suppose he does that; suppose he gets all the benefits of these provisions in bankruptcy, and suppose at the same time that he is brought before the Resident Magistrates for having conspired, having induced the other joint tenants to conspire, for the non-fulfilment of his legal obligation, while he gets the benefits of bankruptcy by going into Court, he at the same time gets the benefit of six months' hard labour for refusing the fulfilment of his obligation. I mention this as a matter that throws my mind into much difficulty, perplexity, and uncertainty; but I come to a case which is a great deal clearer. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby referred to that which I conceive to be the central proposition of the Bill—namely, this—that any man who practises exclusive dealing and induces anybody else to practise it may be visited with six months' hard labour. Is there any doubt about that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight): Certainly.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Eh? There is a doubt, then?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Yes.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Then—has anybody got the Bill? [the Bill was handed to the right hon. Gentleman]—"any person who shall take part in any criminal conspiracy"—that is, in any conspiracy, for a conspiracy is criminal—I leave out the words immaterial to my purpose—

> "To induce any person or persons not to let, hire, use, or occupy any land, or not to deal with, work for, or hire any person or persons in the ordinary course of trade, business, or occupation."

Is there any doubt about the meaning of those words? Is there any doubt that they render a person liable to be brought before the magistrates and punished with six months' hard labour for the practice of exclusive dealing, and for inducing other persons to practise it? Is there any doubt about that?

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Yes. It turns upon the words "criminal conspiracy."

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: The words are as plain English as ever was written.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I say it turns on the words "criminal conspiracy."

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Oh, nonsense. "It turns upon the words criminal conspiracy." It is admitted, then, that if a conspiracy is criminal, it is to induce any person to practise by a criminal conspiracy exclusive dealing, and they will be liable to six months with hard labour. Then I refer, Sir, to the argument of my right hon. Friend, to which no person on the Treasury Bench or elsewhere has attempted the slightest answer; and I ask again—Is not every conspiracy criminal? Is not every conspiracy an offence, a crime, and a misdemeanour? I expect a reply to that from anyone on the Treasury Bench; I shall be glad of a reply from any one of the legal authorities. Now I say that this is an extension of the category of crime. It makes the Bill not a Bill against crime, but against combination. What is combination? Combination in Ireland is now detached from crime. It is because it is detached generally from crime that you are going to strike at it as combination. Combination, Sir, is the weapon by means of which—and by means of which alone—the Irish people, in their weakness and in their poverty, have been able to make head against the wealthy and the strong. If you could put down combination—aye, and combination for exclusive dealing, not combination with intimidation, which is a totally different matter—you would deprive the Irish people of that which Sir Redvers Buller tells you has been their only available weapon. What, then, is the first proposition that comes out about this Bill? It is a Bill aimed at the Irish people. It is idle to talk of criminals; it is idle to talk of guilty persons here and there. It is a Bill aimed at the nation—[*Cries of* "No!" —a taking away from the nation. [*Cries of* "No!"] Is that not true? [*Cries of* "No!"] Without interruptions of that kind, is it not lawful for me to state my opinion? Does the noble Lord and others who sit near him really think that kind of cry of "No" upon a matter of argument carries with it demonstrative conclusion? It is totally contrary to all the usages and practice of this House, and absolutely at variance with them. I know that it cannot be suppressed effectively from the Chair; but I only wish to observe that no object is gained by it. In my opinion, the first thing is that this is a Bill evidently aimed against the people of Ireland. Do not let it be supposed for a moment that I look with indifference on exclusive dealing. I think my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale described it very fairly to-night as a very great evil—a gross evil, which, in England, a good many among the wealthy classes use. But that which is here done from wantonness is done in Ireland from necessity. That is upon the evidence of your witnesses. If this is a Bill against the people of Ireland, the next effect of the Bill will be that which appears to me as the effect of the whole policy of the Government, and of my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale—namely, what is called to play into the hands of the hon. Member for Cork and his Friends. The more Bills of this kind you have the more you mark your policy with this character—the more you strengthen the influence which is exercised by these hon. Gentlemen. I do not mean at this time to go into any questions connected with the hon. Gentleman and his Friends further than this—to say that I, at least, have never, in this House or elsewhere, since the year 1881—never, upon any single occasion, seen in his words or acts a disposition unfavourable to law and order, or to the fulfilment of legal obligations. He has never used a word to that effect; but I say this, on the other hand—and I should think I probably understand what I say—that I long for the time to come when the people of Ireland shall come into more natural relations with those who are their superiors in wealth and station; when the upper classes, the leisured classes of the country, who are now in the main separated, unhappily—many excellent men there are among them, men who, trying their very best to do their duty in different circumstances, but being, as a body, separated from the people—I long for the day when they shall become competitors with the hon. Member for Cork in the exercise of the natural, genuine, and legitimate influence which I believe, undoubtedly, in all circumstances, to be essential to the healthy condition of the body politic. I object, therefore, to this Bill, because, whereas we are told that Home Rule is to give power to the hon. Gentleman and his Friends, I say that Home Rule is opening the door to others to make it desirable for others to enter it in competition with him for the favours and the love of the Irish people. Well, Sir, if this is a Bill to put down combination, through the medium of its enactment, against exclusive dealing, and, in some degree, combinations against the performance of legal obligations, it is a Bill for the increase, and not the diminution, of crime. I ought to say this to remind you of the inequality with respect to the fulfilment of legal obligations you are now going to introduce into the law of Ireland. You are going to make all combination against a legal obligation, although it be one which you are giving every encouragement to people to set aside, illegal, and to make it punishable with six months' hard labour. But in your own Trade Union Act you have enabled the members of trade unions to work against legal obligations, because, by the Act of August 11, 1875, you have enacted that an agreement or combination of two or more persons to do or promise to have done any act in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute between employers and workmen shall not be indictable as a conspiracy if such an act, committed by one person only, would not be an offence. Trade disputes, as a whole, are about the non-fulfilment of contracts. Now, Sir, is it or is it not true that, if this Bill produces an important effect against known combinations, it will lead to an increase of crime? I hold, beyond doubt, that it will lead to an increase of crime, through the increase of secret societies. My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale, with the candour which I must say never deserts him even under great pressure, admitted that it was possible that there might be an increase of secret societies under a Bill of this sort. Now, Sir, here is a document which expresses the sentiments of the Bishops and clergy of one of the Roman Catholic dioceses. They state the case thus; and, though there are one or two epithets stronger than I should use, the statement is, nevertheless, substantially most just—

> "The folly of imposing coercion," says the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, "on a people among whom public crime of any magnitude is comparatively rare, is only equalled by its wickedness. It offers excuses to designing men to lead our youths into secret societies; and such societies, under the pretext of resisting the unjust oppression of coercion, will soon produce a deadly harvest of crime. Therefore, in the interests of social order, as well as because eternal interests will be jeopardized, we raise our warning voices, declaring before God and man that the authors and projectors of the proposed legislation will be responsible for the evils which will follow if they are carried into effect."

These are strong epithets, which I do not adopt—excusable, perhaps, under the circumstances; but every other word I entirely and cordially accept. Sir, depend upon it legislation against a nation is vain and futile. Combination in Ireland cannot be put down. For 30 years after the Union Ireland practically had hardly a voice in Parliament. So limited was the popular power, that its first manifestation was when O'Connell was elected against Vesey Fitzgerald. In granting the boon of Catholic emancipation in 1829, almost everything that savoured of popular representation in the former law was put down by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel in the new law with respect to the 40*s.* freeholder. For a long time the franchise in Ireland was limited, and the representation was consequently less effective. But we have now extended it, and put it upon a basis of real and genuine equality with Great Britain; and the consequence is that you have a national declaration of such strength and firmness, and evidently destined to such permanence of existence, that it is idle to suppose you can pass it by as if it did not exist. Combination cannot be put down. If it is driven beneath the surface it will work by secret societies. The question is by whom it is desirable that combination should be guided. I say that it is desirable that it should be guided by those who are responsible to this House, who appear among us, against whom accusations can be made, whose language and acts can be questioned. It is of immense public importance that combination should not be carried on by secret agents, shielded by popular sympathy, and withdrawn altogether from our view and our control. That is the alternative. We say that combination, if it cannot be avoided in the present unhappy circumstances of Ireland, ought to be guided by responsible persons in public positions. The Bill says—"Let it be guided by secret societies." But in promoting the action of secret societies you go further; you go most unwittingly in contravention of all the wishes of the people; you give encouragement even to the extremest forms of crime. I hear of combination and correspondence between hon. Gentlemen in this House and gentlemen who have contemplated methods of violence. In my opinion, those who contemplate acts of violence—those to whom the ideas of the dagger and dynamite are familiar—will look with satisfaction on the proceedings of the Government. Happily, the people of Ireland—as we see from the enormous reduction of the crime of that country—the people of Ireland have become weaned in a wonderful degree from the use of, or from the countenance of, violence. This has not been the consequence of coercive legislation; it has been the consequence of attempts—sincere, well-meant, and in a degree successful—to give them justice. This Bill tends to drive them back into the arms of those who would incite them to crime; it tends again to produce that temporary indulgence in crime which is the necessary accompaniment of indulgence in oppression. The Bill, Sir, in my view, is a cup of poison. I will have no part in presenting this cup to the lips of Ireland. It must be offered to her by other hands than mine. To me, it will be honour and happiness enough should I be permitted the smallest share in dashing it to the ground.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland and Mr. Parnell rose together.

Mr. SPEAKER called upon the former.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour)(Manchester, E.): Sir, I am sorry to stand between the hon. Member opposite and the House; but the House will have perceived that after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, and which was from end to end a condemnation of the policy of Her Majesty's Government, it is absolutely necessary that someone responsible for that policy should forthwith make a reply. I will make that reply as short as I can. I confess that when I first knew it would be my lot to speak for the fourth time on this subject, and that I should have to follow the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, I felt I had a heavy task before me; but, now that I have heard the right hon. Gentleman's speech, I confess that my terrors are entirely dissipated. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman's speech was remarkable for much that it said, and it was remarkable also for something that it left unsaid. The debate on Friday night and in the early part of this evening's discussion has become extremely hot—too hot, I fear, for the proper conduct of our proceedings—and a subject has been raised, for the first time, of great importance in connection with this Bill. I do not, however, propose to do more than touch upon it—the right hon. Gentleman did not touch upon it at all. He contented himself with passing a eulogium upon the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell). I must, in reply to the hon. Member for West Belfast (Mr. Sexton), tell him that the subject on which he touched, and which was touched upon by the hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh (Colonel Saunderson), is entirely relevant to the subject-matter of this Bill, because it deals with the leaders who have had the management, first of the Land League, and then of the National League; and the character of those leaders cannot be a matter of indifference when we are discussing the character of this organization, which we believe to be in no small degree responsible for the existing state of terrorism in Ireland. The hon. Member tells us that the editor of *The Times* deserves to be hanged. Well, the law of this country will not permit it.

Mr. PARNELL: The forger.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, the forger, or the proprietor. [*Interruption.*] I hope the House will hear me out. The hon. Member for West Belfast can bring on the owner and editor as serious a punishment as ever he could desire through a Court of Law. The hon. Member said he would go from end to end of England and refute the calumnious assertions that have been made. I will suggest to him a better way. Let him bring his case into Court; let him have it tried where it can be tried fairly.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): Will the right hon. Gentleman change the venue, and let the trial take place in Ireland?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Gentleman and his Friends refrain from that course, and betake themselves to platform oratory, I give them this warning—that the people of this country will form the inevitable conclusion that they prefer to stand on a platform where they can make any assertion they like without fear of contradiction, rather than appear in a witness-box in a Court of Law where they would have to pass through the ordeal of cross-examination. I leave that point, however, which I have never regarded as material to my case, and I pass on to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. That speech divided itself into two parts—the part in which he dealt with the provisions of the Bill, and that in which he dealt with the evidence for crime on which we base our policy. I will take them in that order. The right hon. Gentleman insinuated, and more than insinuated, that Resident Magistrates are not the proper judges to whom summary jurisdiction should be entrusted. But a similar jurisdiction was given to Resident Magistrates by the right hon. Gentleman's Bill in 1882, and under the Bill of 1870 summary jurisdiction was not only given to Resident Magistrates, but also to ordinary magistrates, who might be, and probably were, landlords. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to give his view of that section of the Bill which deals with criminal conspiracy. The right hon. Gentleman must, I think, have taken his law from the right hon. Member for Derby. That right hon. Gentleman has long discarded the epithet "learned;" and his legal observations in this House appear now to be confused by some faint and half-forgotten reminiscences of the studies of his youth. I am not an authority on legal matters, but I am informed that the whole version of the Law of Conspiracy given by the right hon. Member for Derby, and repeated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, is erroneous. Both right hon. Gentlemen agree that the word "criminal," as applied to "conspiracy," is superfluous. I am informed that that view is incorrect. The whole of the clause is governed by the fact that the conspiracy is a criminal conspiracy—that is to say, that it aims at unlawful ends by lawful means, or at lawful ends by unlawful means. There may be a perfectly innocent combination——

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Is that conspiracy?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: So I am told. I do not know whether the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian is giving us his own law. I can assure the House that I am not giving it my own law. I am advised that a conspiracy need not be criminal; and, therefore, the case of two tenants guilty of a conspiracy because they agree not to take a farm, or not to pay a certain rent, is purely imaginary and wholly impossible. Under the Bill, one man may induce another not to pay rent, or not to deal with A B, by lawful means, without being liable to punishment. But if he combines with another by criminal means to do either of these things, no doubt he will be liable for criminal conspiracy, and would come under the provisions of the Bill. What, then, becomes of the criticism of the right hon. Gentleman? It vanishes altogether in smoke. I now come to the main point of the right hon. Gentleman's speech, in which he treated of the evidence on which the Bill is framed. I do not dwell on the subject touched on by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian—namely, the American support given to hon. Gentlemen opposite. The right hon. Gentleman has heard of the Irish vote in America. Does he recollect that in a certain speech in a certain critical stage of a contest he himself seemed very conscious that the virtue of a Party might be strained to the breaking point in order to get the Irish vote even in England? [An hon. MEMBER: How about Canada?] There is an Irish vote even in Canada. It is a cosmopolitan evil which cannot be avoided. Does he doubt that the same temptation may have influenced gentlemen on the other side of the Atlantic who may not have the same motives as we have for wishing to see the law obeyed? If the right hon. Gentleman has heard of the Irish vote, may I not take that into account, and make some abatement from the value which he gives to the American criticism of English politics

Leaving this topic, the right hon. Gentleman then went on to ask us whether we were committed to our Land Bill. I do not think I ever heard a more extraordinary question addressed to the Government of the country by the responsible Opposition. Of course, the Government are committed to every Bill of the first class which they bring in. Does the right hon. Gentleman suppose that it is a sham, an imposture, an illusion? If so, what possible grounds has he for that supposition? I confess, when I see the reception which that Bill has met with both from hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway and right hon. Gentlemen above, the Government have very little inducement to go on with it; because, for purposes which we may guess, but into which it is not my business to enter, they appear to have entered into an "innocent conspiracy" to denounce a measure which I believe will do more to prevent anything harsh in the operation of the Land Laws in Ireland than any other measure ever proposed by the Government of this country. Then the right hon. Gentleman complains bitterly, and not for the first time, of the manner in which the Government has withheld statistical information from the House. We have given to the House as much information as any of our Predecessors. The right hon. Gentleman's memory deceives him. He goes back to August, 1881; and it is undoubtedly true that the late Mr. Forster gave to the House exceptional statistical and other information. But, at that time, the system of criminal statistics was begun which has been continued down to the present time. By that system it has always been supposed that the House has been kept adequately informed of the condition of crime in Ireland. It was supposed to be sufficient in 1882, when the Government brought in their Crimes Bill, and the present Government have followed the precedent, and have given similar statistics. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-on-Tyne accused us of having withheld information which it was customary to give to Parliament. We have done nothing of the kind. Every single bit of information which it has been customary to give we have given, and the Returns which I gave to right hon. Gentlemen opposite were given in addition to the customary information. But I am bound to say that the temptation to give statistics to right hon. Gentlemen opposite is not increased by the manner in which they use them. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has again reiterated the assertion that, excluding threatening letters from the statistics of crime, the number of offences in 1886 only exceeds by six those of 1885. The right hon. Gentleman has not taken the trouble to look at the statistics which we gave him. Excluding threatening letters, crime in 1886 stood to crime in 1885 as 632 to 506, so that instead of exceeding by six it exceeded it by over 120. The right hon. Gentleman has been already corrected once in this matter; but, wholly undeterred, he repeats the original error, and I have no doubt that, in spite of this second contradiction, hon. Gentlemen opposite will go about the country and will announce that crime in 1886 was the same as in 1885; or that if it differed at all, it differed only from it by six cases. Now, I confess that I do not think that the case which he has made against us is a very formidable one; but I suppose his excuse will be that the work is already done, and that he has nothing to add to the speech made some days ago by the hon. Member for Cork. Both the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby rely, and rely solely, as far as I can understand it, upon the speech made by the hon. Member for Cork last week in support of their case. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has informed us that the hon. Member for Cork has torn my case, I think he said, to tatters, and I suppose he has not thought it necessary to repeat the operation to-night. I confess that when I heard the speech of the hon. Member for Cork, which I listened to with admiration as a great Parliamentary effort, extremely interesting and extremely eloquent, the one part of it which I thought neither very important nor very interesting was that in which he dealt with our statistical case. But I bow to the superior judgment of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and will accept the hon. Member for Cork's speech as the authorized exposition of the case for the Opposition. I proceed, then, to deal with his criticisms in detail. I will not go into the case of Mr. Crosby. The hon. Member for Cork gave a long and eloquent account of the wrongs of this Mr. Crosby and the action taken by the late Mr. Forster in 1881, under circumstances which the hon. Member said indicated great tyranny. It is not my business to defend the late Mr. Forster, or the arbitrary acts, if they were arbitrary, of the right hon. Gentleman opposite and his Government. I believe the version given by the hon Member for Cork was entirely incorrect; and if the right hon. Gentleman desires to refute the hon. Member for Cork I will supply him with materials; but, in the meanwhile, I do not think it will be good taste to interfere in this lovers' quarrel. The next question which the hon. Gentleman dealt with was that of the Judges' charges, and there he was followed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I confess that to hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, who since the alliance which he has contracted with the Party below the Gangway has adopted not only their friendship but their weapons; who has held high office once, and may hold it again—to hear him attacking the Irish and English Judges, and giving the House to understand that everything of an arbitrary character which has ever taken place in the administration of the Irish and English law was due to the Judges was a thing profoundly to be deplored. Upon that point I can only say that all my Predecessors, who like myself have had to perform the painful task of presenting Coercion Bills to the House, have, like myself, relied upon the charges of the the Judges. The hon. Member for Cork, with whose speech I am still dealing, went on to quote some figures relating to crime in Ireland which he asserts I stated in the course of my remarks, and from which he professed to draw the conclusion that there were after all only 755 crimes committed in the course of the year 1886. Here, again, however, the hon. Member has misquoted me. What I said—and I am quoting from the report of my speech in *The Times*—was that the figures related not to the crime of the year, but to that of the interval between the Summer and Winter Assizes, and that they further related only to the more grave offences. Therefore, the hon. Member for Cork appears to be as unfortunate in quoting my figures as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has been in quoting the figures which have been laid upon the Table of the House. Then the hon. Member for Cork proceeded to deal with the subject of the intimidation of witnesses, and a more important subject than that it is impossible to imagine. It lies at the root of the whole Irish Question. The hon. Member says that the injured persons who suffered outrages and who refused to come forward as witnesses had been hurt in faction fights, in which case it was regarded as a point of honour not to give information to the police. There are two answers to be given to that statement—in the first place, that in cases where persons were injured in faction fights in Ireland last year information was given to the police and the guilty persons were punished; and, in the second place, that in the months I have referred to not a single faction fight occurred in the district in question.

Mr. PARNELL: I said there were also disputes arising out of drunkenness in returning home from fairs. That applies to the figures which the right hon. Gentleman quoted. As a matter of fact, there were plenty of faction fights during the period referred to by the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Upon the latter point the hon. Member is mistaken. I have the police reports as my authority, and the hon. Gentleman's usual complaint is, that the police reports do no under-state, but over-state crime. With regard to the point that evidence is not given of these crimes, I may refer to the case of the Curtin family. In the early days of this debate an hon. Member opposite said that that case occurred two years ago. That is true; but the Curtin family have been subjected to the most monstrous treatment down to the very moment at which I am speaking. I received only a few days ago an account of the misery to which they had been subjected. The facts are these—In 1885 John Curtin was assaulted in his house by a band of Moonlighters—ruffians, armed and disguised, and he was shot. One of his daughters pulled off the mask from one of the criminals and identified him, and eventually two of these scoundrels were convicted, and were sentenced to 14 years' penal servitude. Ever since that time, and down to this day, the widow and her family have been persecuted with a relentless ferocity which only fiends incarnate could invent. She and her family have not been allowed to attend Mass on Sunday. They have been rigidly Boycotted, labourers have refused to work on their farm, and notices threatening them with death have been posted on their door during the night. Mrs. Curtin advertised her interest in the farm to be sold by auction; but no bidder came forward, because notices had been posted threatening the purchaser with the same death that Curtin had met with. So much for tenant right in that district. Mrs. Curtin determined to sell her dairy cattle and buy dry stock; but the man who promised to care for the cattle was visited by night and threatened with death. Consequently the widow and her six orphan children have been left helpless. This is a perfectly authentic statement of the most recent phase of this horrible case. Can you wonder that after that those who are the victims of outrage do not willingly come forward in a Court of Law to give evidence? One more case I will cite. A man named Mullins, in County Clare, was the principal witness in a case of Moonlighting which occurred in December last; and he was not only the principal witness, but the principal victim. His house was entered by a disguised party, who knocked him down, beat him, kicked him, and fired at him. He fully identified his assailants, who were, however, acquitted at the last Ennis Assizes. The Police Authorities report that his life is now in great danger; and if he were to remain in the county he would require constant protection. The family of Mullins consists of his wife, aged upwards of 60, in delicate health, and his niece, a young girl. He has recently stated that he had no desire to leave his home in Ireland; but that he was willing to go to England, America, or anywhere, as he was starving and would have to go to the workhouse. Yet his only crime was that of going into a Court of Law and swearing to the identity of the men who so brutally outraged him. Is it a matter of surprise after that to have this extraordinary number of persons injured refusing to come forward as witnesses in your Courts? Having dealt with the question of the intimidation of witnesses, the hon. Member for Cork went on to deal with the question of jurors, and he complained of me because the four cases of failure of justice that I chose were not selected from the counties where crime was worst. Why did I not select them from the counties where crime was worst? It was because I wanted to show that, even where crime was not worst, the state of the country was such that justice could not be got in the Courts of Law. There was no difficulty in finding such cases in Clare, Cork, Kerry, and the West and South-West of Ireland. They abounded. In no less than four counties—in Kerry, Limerick, Clare, and Galway, not only was there a failure of juries to convict, but the jurors were so obviously wanting in the power or the wish to do their duty that the Judge had to postpone cases to the next Assizes. So much for that complaint against me that I had avoided dealing with the counties where crime was worst. Yes, Sir; and then the hon. Gentleman began to criticize specific cases I had brought forward of a failure of justice. I brought forward four cases. The hon. Gentleman criticized two of them—only two—and of one of them he gave two versions, which were inconsistent with each other. He gave them both as true, although they could not both be true; but he pledged himself to prove the truth of them before a Committee of this House. Well, not only was one of them untrue, but, as it happens, both were untrue. The hon. Gentleman challenged the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant to appeal to the Crown Solicitor. I appealed to the Crown Solicitor, and he gives an entirely different version to that of the hon. Member for Cork. What does the Crown Solicitor say? [A VOICE: Mr. Bolton.] Mr. Bolton—yes. Yes, Sir; it was at the instance of the hon. Member for Cork that the appeal was made to Mr. Bolton to ascertain the truth of the case. I have appealed to Mr. Bolton, and he distinctly contradicts the version of the hon. Member; but I have not contented myself with appealing to Mr. Bolton; I have appealed also to the Crown Counsel, and what the Crown Counsel says is this — [An hon. MEMBER: Who is the Crown Counsel?] Mr. R. Ryan, Q.C.

MR. PARNELL: Whose case is it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It was Clark's case. I beg pardon; it was my fault; I should have explained before that it was Clark's case. Crown Counsel inform me that the evidence was of a very conclusive kind, and if there had been no disturbing elements they would have had a conviction. [An hon. MEMBER: That is no contradiction.]

MR. PARNELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman do me the justice to remember that, in this case of Clark's, my informant admitted that there should have been a conviction, and pointed out that it was owing to the difficult nature of the case that some of the juries failed to agree. In the statement that the right hon. Gentleman has given, there is no contradiction of the statement of my informant that only two jurymen dissented from the verdict of guilty.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Gentleman says there is no disagreement at all. Mr. Ryan says that there is no foundation for that statement; the case was an extremely simple one, and the prisoner had been convicted of the same kind of fraud before.

MR. PARNELL: Mr. Ryan gives no opinion of his own about the division of the jury. He says, he was informed that the jury were divided.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Now I pass from the case of Clark, with regard to which the hon. Member for Cork gave two inconsistent versions.

MR. PARNELL: The only inconsistency of the two versions I gave is, that one informant stated that two jurors held out, and the other said that only one had done so.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I confess I thought from the interruption of the hon. Member that he thought that the question of the precise number of jurymen who held out was extremely important. Now, I come to the case of the man Hogan, which, the House will remember, was one of a brutal outrage on a girl. There again I appealed to the Crown Solicitor and to the Crown Counsel; they both agreed that the case was an extremely strong one, and the Crown Counsel said that he must do Irish jurors the justice to acknowledge their readiness to convict in such cases; but he feared that in this case there was something more than the evidence operating upon their minds. After that, the hon. Member will admit that in the only two cases which the hon. Member criticized out of the four I mentioned, I have ample evidence from the best sources that my statements were absolutely correct.

MR. PARNELL: I referred to the Assistant Secretary of the right hon. Gentleman, or to the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Colonel King-Harman)—who has since become his assistant—and to the Crown Counsel, with regard to the question of how the jurors were divided, and in no other respect.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Crown Counsel says—

> "Upon the general question, I regret I have been forced to the conclusion that in Tipperary, in cases of crimes of an agrarian character, it is impossible to get jurors to convict, no matter how clear the evidence may be."

The Crown Counsel goes on to say that he knew beforehand what the result of a trial would be; that they set aside jurors coming from the immediate neighbourhood of where the offence had been committed, for fear of intimidation; but that the course was adopted of putting forward a witness for the prisoner, not because he could bring forward any evidence bearing on the case, but to show that the prisoner possessed the sympathy of a certain powerful organization, and this had its effect even upon jurors who lived at a distance from the scene of the outrage. So much for the particular cases I have brought forward, and the general proposition that jurors will not convict. Then the hon. Member for Cork went on to deal with Boycotting. Now, with regard to Boycotting, there is no case to be made by hon. Members opposite; they have practically given it up. Everybody knows that Boycotting prevails over certain districts of Ireland, and makes life perfectly intolerable. Everyone knows that every branch of the National League uses Boycotting as the means of carrying out its decrees.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I have more than once stated distinctly in this House that for the conduct of the branches of the National League, as well as for its organization in general, I took the entire responsibility, and I say that the statement of the right hon. Gentleman is altogether inconsistent with the facts.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not think that anyone else but the hon. Member doubts what I say. But though the hon. Member for Cork did not dare to traverse the general proposition, he did assert one thing—that pressure was never put on persons to join the League. I think that the most audacious statement I ever heard. I have a good many cases of such occurrences here, which prove that it is done all over Ireland. One instance is from Mayo, and it is reported in *United Ireland.* In this case a branch of the League passed a resolution that no tradesmen shall work for any person who cannot produce his card of membership of the League. The hon. Member for Cork stated that any branch of the League that put such pressure on would be immediately dissolved.

MR. PARNELL: So it was; that branch was immediately dissolved. [An hon. MEMBER: Sold again.]

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Then there was another case in Sligo.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: Yes; and I called for the resignation of the Committee; and as a testimony of the capacity of my countrymen for Home Rule, I beg to state that my recommendation was adopted.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Was the Ardagh branch dissolved? A resolution was passed that the names of farmers who did not join the branch were to be hung up on the wall of the office and placarded in the neighbourhood.

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: My attention was drawn to this; and on my advice that such a resolution was against the rules, it was not hung up.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Can the hon. Gentleman give me the date?

MR. T. C. HARRINGTON: The date must be, as well as I recollect, about 12 months ago.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The resolution I read is on March 26, 1887. That has really completed the case against us with one exception. The hon. Gentleman uttered an elaborate eulogy on the attack which the right hon. Gentleman made on our statistics. Observe the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian answers for the attack of the hon. Member for Cork, and how the hon. Member for Cork, in his turn, guarantees the attack of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Unfortunately, as I have shown, the right hon. Gentleman's figures are entirely wrong, and, as I have also shown, in one case, the hon. Member for Cork has misquoted them, and though each of this two distinguished politicians are thus prepared to back each other's Bills, I do not think they add materially to the security. I have very little more to say. So much for the hon. Member for Cork's case against the Government. I do not pretend to have torn it to rags and tatters; but I lay claim to have given a plain and business-like statement to the House. If the right hon. Gentleman, on looking through the speech of the hon. Member for Cork, can find any fragments I have left untorn, he is at liberty to use them, and I will take no further trouble to contradict them. I turn now to the case made against us by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has actually given us to understand that, in asking the House to pass a Coercion Bill on the figures of crime we have, we are doing something wholly without precedent. Well, I am astonished at the right hon. Gentleman. No man in this House has a larger experience of Coercion Bills than he. As far as I can calculate, since the great Reform Bill was passed, there have been 45 Coercion Bills passed for Ireland. A long and a melancholy tale! Of those Bills, 21 have been passed by Governments of which the right hon. Gentleman was a member. They began when he was tottering in his official long clothes; when he was a Lord of the Treasury; when the Conservative Government of that date renewed Lord Grey's great Coercion Bill, and the painful list goes on until 1882. And, Sir, does the House notice that the right hon. Gentleman has never alluded to any Coercion Bill at all except those of 1881 and 1882. He has a long experience before those dates. Has he thought of the Coercion Bill of 1866, or of the Coercion Bill of 1870? The Coercion Bill of 1866 was the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. [Mr. SEXTON: Against Fenianism.] Very well. The point of the right hon. Gentleman is that you ought never to pass any exceptional criminal legislation for Ireland, unless crime is at a certain level. I say that, in 1866, the then Liberal Government, of which the right hon. Gentleman was a Member, passed the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, which is a far greater violation of the liberties of the subject than anything we purpose—the liberties of the subject as they have always been understood in this country. In 1866 crime was not only lower than it is now, but lower than it has ever been. Agrarian crime fell in 1866 to the astonishingly low level of 86 or thereabouts, and that was the year in which the right hon. Gentleman suspended the Habeas Corpus Act. [Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: There were other causes.] My point is, that there may be causes outside criminal statistics, and how is that met? By telling me of a particular cause which, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, justified the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. However, if the right hon. Gentleman objects to me citing the Coercion Act of 1866, I will go on to the case of the Coercion Act of 1870. Now, Sir, I have looked at the evidence in favour of it, and I have looked at the Act itself; and I boldly say that that Act was a far greater violation of public liberty than anything we propose. It contained "Curfew" clauses; it contained clauses by which the Lord Lieutenant, on his own Motion, might confiscate the whole plant of a newspaper and destroy it; it contained clauses by which a single magistrate, an ordinary magistrate, probably a landlord, might put in prison and keep there practically, indefinitely, any stranger to the neighbourhood, about whose conduct he himself, in his own judgment, was dissatisfied. I say those three provisions by themselves differentiate the Bill of 1870 from this Bill, and make the former a Coercion Bill instead of being a Criminal Law Amendment Bill. They make it really a Bill for coercion, instead of a Bill which does not increase crime, but merely improves the machinery by which crime shall be detected and punished. What were the statistics of crime on which the Bill of 1870 was founded? I will give them to the House. In 1869, the year before the Bill passed, there were 10 murders; this year there were 10 murders. I am now comparing 1869 with 1886. Firing at the person, 16 offences in both years; other offences against the person, 26 in 1869; 48 in 1886; total of offences against the person, 52 in 1869, 74 in 1886; killing or maiming of cattle, 11 in 1869, 73 in 1886; firing into dwellings, 6 in 1869, 43 in 1886; total of agrarian offences, excluding threatening letters and notices, 370 in 1869, as against 632 in 1886. So that, if you exclude threatening letters, about which the right hon. Gentleman made so light to-night, but which on previous occasions I think I have heard him explain to the House, mean something very different in Ireland than in England —if you exclude threatening letters, the total of the more serious offences I have enumerated in 1886 was very nearly double what it was in 1869, and that is my answer to the right hon. Gentleman who appears to think, that in view of the state of crime in Ireland, we are acting in a monstrous and unprecedented manner. We bring in a Bill which, whatever else may be said of it, is not open to the charge that it interferes with personal liberty, or with the freedom of the Press, to the same extent as the Act which the right hon. Gentleman passed in 1870 did. It is impossible to lay down a hard-and-fast rule of the precise amount of crime in any year to justify a Coercion Bill; but, at all events, we can point to the precedent set by the right hon. Gentleman himself; we can say that at a time when Ireland was far less disorganized, when intimidation did not prevail to the same extent, when law ran its course with far greater certainty, and when crime was far less than it is now, he and his Government passed a Bill compared with which this, in my opinion, is but a small interference with the rights of the people. Well, Sir, I have abbreviated as much as I can the remarks I have to make, but I think I have shown, firstly, that the case of the hon. Member for Cork has broken down absolutely; and, secondly, that the right hon. Gentleman is incorrect when he says we are acting without precedent in this matter. Now, does anyone deny—does anyone who has seriously and impartially looked into the facts deny—that at this moment in Ireland extensive demoralization prevails; that in certain districts, in Clare, for instance, rates are unpaid, which, I believe, is a wholly unprecedented state of things in any other district; that damages by malicious injuries have reached a level never before known in Irish history—at any rate, that they are far greater than they were in 1881, 1882, and 1883; that juries fail to do their duty—that is admitted by the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce); that tenant right, as well as landlord right, is interfered with; that there is a stronger case, on mere statistics, than has been thought sufficient in previous years, by previous Governments for previous Coercion Bills; that, apart from crime and outrage, there is now a stronger case for coercion than there has ever been before from the general demoralization and intimidation which prevails from one end of the country to the other; and that, lastly, and the worst of all, so great is the intimidation and outrage that the victims themselves are afraid to complain lest worse things befall them. We are told that Coercion Bills have failed. If we appeal to experience—such experience as the history of the last 50 years gives us—I confess I am inclined to say it is not Coercion Bills that fail, but remedial measures. In 1829 you passed the greatest reform that has ever been made in Ireland—namely, Catholic Emancipation. Three or four years afterwards—as soon as England had got out of the great crisis upon the Reform Bill—you had to pass the greatest measure of coercion this country has ever passed for Ireland. You abolished the Irish Church in 1869. In 1870 you brought in a Coercion Bill, the tremendous provisions of which I have explained to the House. You passed a Land Bill in 1881; and in 1882 you brought in a Bill only second in its severity to Lord Grey's Bill of 1833. The result is discouraging, I admit; but that is no reason why you should give up the effort to legislate for Ireland. You have failed, because your remedial legislation has been absurd; it has been founded upon utterly false principles; and, being founded upon those principles, it has borne with its natural fruits. But another reason why you have failed is, that your criminal legislation has always been so spasmodic. Had you been content, in earlier days, to pass a Bill of the kind which we propose, which, at the will of Parliament, could be restricted in as small limits as you please, which could practically be suspended by the action of Parliament—I exaggerate—which could be suspended by the action of the House of Commons alone, because upon this House the existence of a ministry depends; if you had passed a Bill which depended upon the will of the House of Commons; if you had kept the Bill in suspension *in terrorem* over the heads of criminals, without requiring this tremendous Parliamentary apparatus to be invoked before the Government could deal with the state of crime in Ireland; if you had thereby avoided the shock you have constantly been obliged to give to the Parliamentary and Constitutional system of the country, I believe you could have avoided many of the evils you have been subjected to; and it is in the hope that we may partly succeed in avoiding these evils in the future that we have refused to put in our Bill any limitation of time, whilst we have given the fullest and completest power to the House of Commons to restrict the operation of the Bill to the minutest limits which may seem to them to be good. Hon. Gentlemen talk, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has talked to-night, of the necessity of having equality between England and Ireland. I desire equality as much as any man. I join in the aspiration of the right hon. Gentleman—I also desire equality between England and Ireland. I desire that the inhabitants of the two countries should be treated precisely and exactly alike. But, Sir, the equality which is first of all the equality to be desired, is the equality in the condition of innocent and law-abiding subjects. What we want are equal results of laws, rather than equal laws. What we want is that every man who does not belong to the criminal classes shall have the same rights in Ireland and in England of having his property protected and his liberty preserved, and we regard that equality as the necessary foundation of every other good which this House may give to Ireland. Unless you build upon that foundation, it is perfectly vain that you erect any structure, however ingenious, however elaborate. Anything that you may build on the shifting sands of Irish lawlessness is foredoomed to destruction. It will fall whenever a political flood beats upon it, and great will be the fall of it. I have nothing more to say to the House. I thank the House for having listened to me so patiently now, not for the first time upon this subject. I do not doubt what the result of the Division we are about to take will be; but I will venture to remind those who hear me that the numbers by which the second reading of this Bill is carried are all important. Let the

House show to-night by its support of this Bill, that it is resolutely determined that the state of things which now exists in Ireland shall be put an end to. I believe such Division by itself, even without the operation of the provisions of the Bill which will follow it, will do more good in Ireland than many people imagine.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. J. Balfour) refrained from answering the speech which I delivered on the first reading of this Bill, and the Government refused to allow the adjournment of the debate, in order that some other Member of the Government should have an opportunity of answering it the next day; and, now, upon the second reading of this Bill, he goes back to the speech, and he attempts an answer to it at a time of the night when he knows perfectly well that no reply can be made to him; and, with characteristic fairness — an unfairness which I suppose we may expect to be continued in the future—he has refused to me the 10 or 12 minutes that I should have craved to refer to a villainous and barefaced forgery which appeared in *The Times* of this morning, obviously for the purpose of influencing the Division, and for no other purpose. I got up when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) sat down. I had not intended to have made a speech at all upon the second reading stage of this Bill. I should not have said more than a very few words in reference to this forgery; but I think I was entitled to have had from the right hon. Gentleman an opportunity of exposing this deliberate attempt to blacken my character at some time when there would have been some chance of what I stated reaching the outside world. I say there is no such chance now. I cannot suppose the right hon. Gentleman, in refusing me the 10 minutes which I crave, had not in his eye the design of practically preventing my denial of this unblushing calumny having that effect upon public opinion which it would otherwise have had if it had been spoken at a reasonable hour of the night. It appears that, in addition to the passage of this Coercion Act, the dice are to be loaded—that your great organs of public opinion in this country are to be permitted to pay miserable creatures for the purpose of producing these calumnies. Who will be safe in such circumstances and under such conditions? I do not envy the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland this first commencement of suppression of defence—this first commencement of calumny and of forgery which has been made by his supporters. We have heard of the misdeeds of Mr. Ford, the editor of *The Irish World;* but Mr. Ford never did anything half so bad as this.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. Member; but as he makes these accusations, I should like to explain that I intervened between the hon. Gentleman and the House simply because I understood that it had been arranged that I should follow the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and that the hon. Member would follow me. No hint reached me that he was going to confine himself to an explanation of, or deal at all with, the accusation in *The Times*, to which he has referred. ["Oh, oh!"] No hint of that kind reached me, and I conceive that the hon. Member might have risen, had he wished, at any time earlier in the evening.

Mr. PARNELL: I was asked officially, at an early hour in the evening, whether I would speak after the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, and I replied that I would, and that I only intended to say a few words in reference to this calumny. I think I ought to have been given the opportunity which I desired. Now, Sir, when I first heard of this precious concoction—I heard of it before I saw it, because I do not take in or even read *The Times* usually—when I heard that a letter of this description, bearing my signature, had been published in *The Times* I supposed that some autograph of mine had fallen into the hands of some person for whom it had not been intended, and that it had been made use of in this way. I supposed that some bank sheet containing my signature, such as many Members who are asked for their signature frequently send—I supposed that such a blank sheet had fallen into hands for which it had not been intended, and that it had been misused in this fashion, or that something of that kind had happened. But when I saw what purported to be my signature, I saw plainly that it was an audacious and unblushing fabrication. Why, Sir, many Members of this House have seen my signature, and if they will compare it with what purports to be my signature in *The Times* of this morning, they will see that there are only two letters in the whole name which bear any resemblance to letters in my own signature as I write it. I cannot understand how the conductors of a responsible, and what used to be a respectable, journal could have been so hoodwinked, so hoaxed, so bamboozled, and that is the most charitable interpretation which I can place on it, as to publish such a production as that as my signature. My writing—its whole character—is entirely different. I unfortunately write a very cramped hand; my letters huddle into each other, and I write with very great difficulty and slowness. It is, in fact, a labour and a toil to me to write anything at all. But the signature in question is written by a ready penman, who has evidently covered as many leagues of letter paper in his life as I have yards. Of course, this is not the time, as I have said, to enter into full details and minutiæ as to comparisons of handwriting; but if the House could see my signature and the forged fabricated signature, they would see that, except as regards two letters, the whole signature bears no resemblance to mine. The same remark applies to the letter. The letter does not purport to be in my handwriting. We are not informed who has written it. It is not alleged even that it was written by anyone who was ever associated with me. The name of this anonymous letter writer is not mentioned. I do not know who he can be. The writing is strange to me. I think I should insult myself if I said—I think, however, that I perhaps ought to say it in order that my denial may be full and complete—that I certainly never heard of the letter. I never directed such a letter to be written. I never saw such a letter before I saw it in *The Times* this morning. The subject-matter of the letter is preposterous on the surface. The phraseology of it is absurd—as absurd as any phraseology that could be attributed to me could possibly be. In every part of it it bears absolute and irrefutable evidence of want of genuineness and want of authenticity. Politics are come to a pretty pass in this country when a Leader of a Party of 86 Members has to stand up, at ten minutes past one, in the House of Commons in order to defend himself from an anonymous fabrication, such as that which is contained in *The Times* of this morning. I have always held, with regard to the late Mr. Forster, that his treatment of his political prisoners was a humane treatment, and a fair treatment, and I think for that reason alone, if for no other, he should have been shielded from such an attempt as was made on his life by the Invincible Association. I never had the slightest notion in the world that the life of the late Mr. Forster was in danger, or that any conspiracy was on foot against him, or any other official in Ireland or elsewhere. I had no more notion than an unborn child that there was such a conspiracy as that of the Invincibles in existence, and no one was more surprised, more thunderstruck, and more astonished than I was when that bolt from the blue fell upon us in the Phœnix Park murders. I knew not in what direction to look for this calamity. It is no exaggeration to say that if I had been in the Park that day, I would gladly have stood between Lord Frederick Cavendish and the daggers of the assassins, and for the matter of that between their daggers and Mr. Burke too. Now, Sir, I leave this subject. I have suffered more than any other man from that terrible deed in the Phœnix Park, and the Irish nation has suffered more than any other nation through it. I go for a moment to the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). The noble Marquess made a rather curious complaint of me. He said that, having denied point-blank a charge that had been made by him against me and the National League during the General Election last year, he was rather surprised that I did not again refer to the matter in the House of Commons. Well, I was rather surprised that the noble Marquess did not refer to it in the House of Commons; because the noble Marquess made a charge which he advanced without a particle of proof. He advanced that charge again to-night without a particle of proof, and I deny that charge as I denied it before, in point-blank terms. I said it was absolutely untrue to say that the Irish National League or the Parliamentary

Party had ever had any communication whatever, direct or indirect, with a Fenian organization in America or this country. I further said that I did not know who the leaders of the Fenian organization in this country or America were. I say that still. But the noble Marquess says he knows who they are, at least he tells us that Mr. Alexander Sullivan — I believe that was the name mentioned — was president of the Clan-na-Gael or Fenian organization. When I asked him how he obtained his knowledge, he said that he obtained it from information he received as a Member of Her Majesty's Government. That may be. But I am not in possession of the information with regard to the Clan-na-Gael which is possessed by the Members of the present, or the late Government. The Clan-na-Gael is a secret organization; it is an oath-bound organization; it gives no information with regard to its members to persons who are not members. I presume that the Government, if they obtained this information with regard to Alexander Sullivan, obtained it through their secret agents in America, through means which are not open to me in any capacity as a private person, or a public politician. It is no answer to me to say that because the noble Marquess a Member of the late Government, with all the information obtainable by the wealth and resources of that Government at his disposal, believes Alexander Sullivan was a member and the leader of the Clan-na-Gael, or any secret organization in America. I have never had any dealings with him, or anyone else, either in Ireland or America, in respect to the doings or proceedings of any secret society whatsoever. All my goings on and sayings and doings in Irish public life have been open and above board, and they have stood the test of the searching investigation of the three years' administration of the Crimes Act by Lord Spencer, who has left it on record that neither any of my Colleagues nor myself were in any way connected with the commission of, or approving of the commission of, any crime. Here are Lord Spencer's words spoken at Newcastle on 21st of April, 1886—

"Foremost among the many objections are these—it is said that you are going to hand over the government of Ireland to men who have encouraged—nay, some I have heard say even have directed—outrage and crime in Ireland. That is a very grave accusation. Now, I have been in a position in my official capacity to see and know nearly all the evidence that has been given in Ireland in regard to the murders and conspiracies to murder that took place in 1881 and 1882, and I can say, without doubt or hesitation, that I have neither heard nor seen any evidence of complicity with those crimes against any of the Irish Representatives. It is right that I should clearly and distinctly express my condemnation of many of the methods by which they carried on their agitation. They often used language and arguments that were as unjustifiable as they were unfounded. They sometimes, perhaps from financial grounds, were silent when words would have been golden, when words might have had a great influence on the state of the country. They might even have employed men for their own legitimate purposes who had been employed in illegal acts by others; this, I must say, but, on the other hand, I believe those men to have an affection for and a real interest in the welfare of their country. Their ability has been shown and acknowledged in the House of Commons by all Parties. I believe that with full responsibility upon them they will know that the only true way of obtaining the happiness and contentment of Ireland is for the Government to maintain law and order, and defend the rights and privileges of every class and of every man in the country."

I cordially re-echo those words. I believe that that expresses the only real way of maintaining law and order in any country—that you must obtain from the majority of the people of the country sympathy towards the law, without which the maintenance of the law is impossible; that you must show the majority of the community that the law is not only made, but that it is also administered for their benefit and fairly and justly to all classes. In this way, and in this way only, can you ever obtain respect and sympathy for law and order in Ireland, or anywhere else. The present Bill may put down crime, or it may increase crime. If it puts it down, it will not put it down by instilling in the minds of the people a sympathy for law and order. Crime will die out only as the effect of sullen submission. You will be no farther, after you have been administering your Crimes Act, in the direction of the real maintenance of law and order than you were at the beginning; nay, not nearly so far. You are crushing by this iron Coercion Bill those beneficial symptoms in Ireland which a Government of wise statesmen and wise administrators would cherish and foster. You are preventing that budding of friendship between the two countries which this generation would never have witnessed in Ireland had it not been for the great exertions of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. Who could have predicted, who would have ventured to predict, that the heat, the passion, the political antipathies engendered by the working of the Protection Act of 1881 and the Crimes Act of 1882 would have all disappeared in three or four short months, and that you would have had the English and the Irish people regarding each other as they did during that happy, that blessed interval, and all this to be put an end to by the mad, the fatuous conduct of the present Government. You are going to plunge everything back into the seething cauldron of disaffection. You cannot see what the results of all this may be. We can only point to the experience of what has happened in past times. We anticipate nothing beneficial from this Bill, either to your country or to ours; and we should not be honest men if we did not warn you, with all the little force at our command, of the terrible dangers that may be before you. I trust that before this Bill goes into Committee, or, at all events, before it leaves Committee, the great English people will make their voices heard, and impress upon their Representatives that they must not go on any further with this coercive legislation. If this House and its majority have not sense enough to see this the great heart of this country will see it, for I believe it is a great and generous heart that can sympathize even when a question is concerned in reference to which there have been so many political antipathies. I am convinced, by what I have seen of the great meetings which have been held over the length and breadth of England and Scotland, that the heart of your nation has been reached—that it has been touched, and though our opponents may be in a majority to-day, that the real force of public opinion is not at their back. A Bill which is supported by men many of whom are looking over their shoulders and behind them, like the soldiers of an army which a panic is beginning to reach, to see which is their readiest mode of retreat, is not likely to get through the difficult times before it emerges from Committee. The result will be modifications of the provisions of the most drastic of the Coercion Acts ever introduced against Ireland since 1833. Do not talk to me of comparing the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act with the present Bill. We have suffered from both. We have suffered from some of the provisions of the present Bill as well as from the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, and we are able to compare the one with the other; and I tell you that the provisions of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act were as child's play in contrast with the provisions of this Bill. The Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act empowered you to arrest and detain in prison those whom you suspected; but it guaranteed them humane treatment, which did much to soften the asperities that otherwise would have been bred between the two nations by that Act. Your prisoners under the Habeas Corpus Act were not starved and tortured as they will be under this. Your political prisoners were not put upon a plank bed, and fed on 16 ounces of bread and water per day, and compelled to pick oakum, and perform hard labour, as they will be under this Bill. The Bill will be a means by which you will be enabled to subject your political prisoners to treatment in your gaols which you reserve in England for the worst of criminals, and it is idle to talk about comparison between the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, under which your prisoners were humanely and properly treated—although imprisonment is hard to bear under the best circumstances—but in the position in which this Bill will place them, your political prisoners will be deliberately starved with hunger and clammed with cold in your gaols. I trust in God, Sir, that this nation and this House may be saved from the degradation and the peril that the mistake of passing this Bill puts them in.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 370; Noes 269: Majority 101.

AYES.

Addison, J. E. W.
Agg-Gardner, J. T.
Ainslie, W. G.
Allsopp, hon. G.
Ambrose, W.
Amherst, W. A. T.
Anstruther, Colonel R. H. L.
Anstruther, H. T.
Ashmead-Bartlett, E.
Atkinson, H. J.
Baden-Powell, G. S.
Baggallay, E.
Bailey, Sir J. R.
Baird, J. G. A.
Balfour, rt. hon. A. J.
Balfour, G. W.
Banes, Major G. E.

Baring, Viscount
Barnes, A.
Barry, A. H. Smith-
Bartley, G. C. T.
Barttelot, Sir W. B.
Bass, H.
Bates, Sir E.
Baumann, A. A.
Beach, W. W. B.
Beadel, W. J.
Beaumont, H. F.
Beckett, E. W.
Beckett, W.
Bective, Earl of
Bentinck, Lord H. C.
Bentinck, rt. hn. G. C.
Bentinck, W. G. C.
Beresford, Lord C. W. de la Poer
Bethell, Commander G. R.
Bickford-Smith, W.
Biddulph, M.
Bigwood, J.
Birkbeck, Sir E.
Blundell, Colonel H. B. H.
Bond, G. H.
Bonsor, H. C. O.
Boord, T. W.
Borthwick, Sir A.
Bridgeman, Col. hon. F. C.
Bright, right hon. J.
Bristowe, T. L.
Brodrick, hon. W. St. J. F.
Brookfield, Col. A. M.
Brooks, Sir W. C.
Brown, A. H.
Bruce, Lord H.
Burghley, Lord
Caine, W. S.
Caldwell, J.
Campbell, Sir A.
Campbell, J. A.
Campbell, R. F. F.
Chamberlain, R.
Chaplin, right hon. H.
Charrington, S.
Churchill, rt. hn. Lord R. H. S.
Clarke, Sir E. G.
Cochrane-Baillie, hon. C. W. A. N.
Coddington, W.
Coghill, D. H.
Colomb, Capt. J. C. R.
Commerell, Adml. Sir J. E.
Compton, F.
Cooke, C. W. R.
Corbett, A. C.
Corbett, J.
Corry, Sir J. P.
Cotton, Capt. E. T. D.
Cranborne, Viscount
Cross, H. S.
Crossley, Sir S. B.
Crossman, Gen. Sir W.
Cubitt, right hon. G.
Curzon, Viscount
Curzon, hon. G. N.
Dalrymple, C.
Davenport, H. T.
Davenport, W. B.
Dawnay, Colonel hon. L. P.
De Cobain, E. S. W.
De Lisle, E. J. L. M. P.
De Worms, Baron H.
Dickson, Major A. G.
Dimsdale, Baron R.
Dixon, G.
Dixon-Hartland, F. D.
Donkin, R. S.
Dorington, Sir J. E.
Dugdale, J. S.
Duncan, Colonel F.
Duncombe, A.
Dyke, rt. hn. Sir W. H.
Eaton, H. W.
Ebrington, Viscount
Edwards-Moss, T. C.
Egerton, hon. A. J. F.
Egerton, hon. A. de T.
Elcho, Lord
Elliot, hon. A. R. D.
Elliot, hon. H. F. H.
Elliot, Sir G.
Elliot, G. W.
Ellis, Sir J. W.
Elton, C. I.
Evelyn, W. J.
Ewart, W.
Ewing, Sir A. O.
Eyre, Colonel H.
Farquharson, H. R.
Feilden, Lt.-Gen. R. J.
Fellowes, W. H.
Fergusson, rt. hn. Sir J.
Field, Admiral E.
Fielden, T.
Finch, G. H.
Finch-Hatton, hon. M. E. G.
Finlay, R. B.
Fisher, W. H.
Fitzgerald, R. U. P.
Fitzwilliam, hon. W. J. W.
Fitz-Wygram, Gen. Sir F. W.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Folkestone, right hon. Viscount
Forwood, A. B.
Fowler, Sir R. N.
Fraser, General C. C.
Fry, L.
Fulton, J. F.
Gardner, R. Richardson-
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. A. E.
Gathorne-Hardy, hon. J. S.
Gedge, S.
Gent-Davis, R.
Giles, A.
Gilliat, J. S.
Godson, A. F.
Goldsmid, Sir J.
Goldsworthy, Major-General W. T.
Gorst, Sir J. E.
Goschen, rt. hn. G. J.
Gray, C. W.
Green, Sir E.
Greenall, Sir G.
Greene, E.
Grimston, Viscount
Grotrian, F. B.
Grove, Sir T. F.
Gunter, Colonel R.
Gurdon, R. T.
Hall, A. W.
Hall, C.
Halsey, T. F.
Hambro, Col. C. J. T.
Hamilton, right hon. Lord G. F.
Hamilton, Lord C. J.
Hamilton, Lord E.
Hamilton, Col. C. E.
Hamley, General Sir E. B.
Hanbury, R. W.
Hankey, F. A.
Hardcastle, E.
Hardcastle, F.
Hartington, Marq. of
Hastings, G. W.
Havelock-Allan, Sir H. M.
Heath, A. R.
Heathcote, Capt. J. H. Edwards-
Heaton, J. H.
Heneage, right hon. E.
Herbert, hon. S.
Hermon-Hodge, R. T.
Hervey, Lord F.
Hill, right hon. Lord A. W.
Hill, Colonel E. S.
Hill, A. S.
Hingley, B.
Hoare, S.
Hobhouse, H.
Holland, right hon. Sir H. T.
Holloway, G.
Holmes, rt. hon. H.
Hornby, W. H.
Houldsworth, W. H.
Howard, J.
Howard, J. M.
Howorth, H. H.
Hozier, J. H. C.
Hubbard, rt. hn. J. G.
Hubbard, E.
Hughes, Colonel E.
Hughes-Hallett, Col. F. C.
Hulse, E. H.
Hunt, F. S.
Hunter, Sir W. G.
Isaacs, L. H.
Isaacson, F. W.
Jackson, W. L.
James, rt. hon. Sir H.
Jardine, Sir R.
Jarvis, A. W.
Jennings, L. J.
Johnston, W.
Kelly, J. R.
Kennaway, Sir J. H.
Kenrick, W.
Kenyon, hon. G. T.
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W.
Ker, R. W. B.
Kerans, F. H.
Kimber, H.
King, H. S.
King-Harman, Colonel E. R.
Knatchbull-Hugessen, H. T.
Knightley, Sir R.
Knowles, L.
Kynoch, G.
Lafone, A.
Laurie, Colonel R. P.
Lawrance, J. C.
Lawrence, Sir J. J. T.
Lawrence, W. F.
Lea, T.
Lechmere, Sir E. A. H.
Lees, E.
Legh, T. W.
Leighton, S.
Lethbridge, Sir R.
Lewis, Sir C. E.
Lewisham, right hon. Viscount
Llewellyn, E. H.
Long, W. H.
Low, M.
Lowther, hon. W.
Lowther, J. W.
Lubbock, Sir J.
Lymington, Viscount
Macartney, W. G. E.
Macdonald, right hon. J. H. A.
Maclean, F. W.
Maclean, J. M.
Maclure, J. W.
M‘Calmont, Captain J.
M‘Garel-Hogg, Sir J.
Makins, Colonel W. T.
Malcolm, Col. J. W.
Mallock, R.
Manners, rt. hon. Lord J. J. R.
March, Earl of
Marriott, rt. hn. W. T.
Maskelyne, M. H. N. Story-
Matthews, rt. hn. H.
Maxwell, Sir H. E.
Mayne, Admiral R. C.
Mildmay, F. B.
Mills, hon. C. W.
Milvain, T.
More, R. J.
Morgan, hon. F.
Morrison, W.
Mount, W. G.
Mowbray, rt. hon. Sir J. R.
Mowbray, R. G. C.
Mulholland, H. L.
Muncaster, Lord
Muntz, P. A.
Murdoch, C. T.
Newark, Viscount
Noble, W.
Norris, E. S.

Northcote, hon. H. S.
Norton, R.
O'Neill, hon. R. T.
Paget, Sir R. H.
Parker, hon. F.
Pearce, W.
Pelly, Sir L.
Penton, Captain F. T.
Pitt-Lewis, G.
Plunket, right hon. D. R.
Plunkett, hon. J. W.
Pomfret, W. P.
Powell, F. S.
Price, Captain G. E.
Puleston, J. H.
Quilter, W. C.
Raikes, rt. hon. H. C.
Rankin, J.
Rasch, Major F. C.
Reed, H. B.
Richardson, T.
Ridley, Sir M. W.
Ritchie, rt. hn. C. T.
Robertson, J. P. B.
Robertson, W. T.
Robinson, B.
Rollit, Sir A. K.
Ross, A. H.
Rothschild, Baron F. J. de
Round, J.
Royden, T. B.
Russell, Sir G.
Russell, T. W.
St. Aubyn, Sir J.
Salt, T.
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. T. M.
Saunderson, Col. E. J.
Sclater-Booth, rt. hn. G.
Sellar, A. C.
Selwin-Ibbetson, rt. hon. Sir H. J.
Selwyn, Captain C. W.
Seton-Karr, H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H.
Sidebotham, J. W.
Sidebottom, T. H.
Sidebottom, W.
Sinclair, W. P.
Smith, rt. hn. W. H.
Smith, A.
Spencer, J. E.
Stanhope, rt. hon. E.
Stanley, E. J.
Stewart, M.
Sutherland, T.
Swetenham, E.
Sykes, C.
Talbot, J. G.
Tapling, T. K.
Taylor, F.
Temple, Sir R.
Theobald, J.
Thorburn, W.
Tollemache, H. J.
Tomlinson, W. E. M.
Tottenham, A. L.
Townsend, F.
Trotter, H. J.
Tyler, Sir H. W.
Verdin, R.
Vincent, C. E. H.
Walsh, hon. A. H. J.
Waring, Colonel T.
Watkin, Sir E. W.
Watson, J.
Webster, Sir R. E.
Webster, R. G.
West, Colonel W. C.
Weymouth, Viscount
Wharton, J. L.
White, J. B.
Whitley, E.
Whitmore, C. A.
Wiggin, H.
Williams, J. Powell-
Wilson, Sir S.
Winn, hon. R.
Wodehouse, E. R.
Wolmer, Viscount
Wood, N.
Wortley, C. B. Stuart-
Wright, H. S.
Wroughton, P.
Yerburgh, R. A.
Young, C. E. B.

TELLERS.
Douglas, A. Akers-
Walrond, Col. W. H.

NOES.

Abraham, W. (Glam.)
Abraham, W. (Limerick, W.)
Acland, A. H. D.
Acland, C. T. D.
Allison, R. A.
Anderson, C. H.
Asher, A.
Asquith, H. H.
Atherley-Jones, L.
Austin, J.
Balfour, Sir G.
Balfour, rt. hon. J. B.
Barbour, W. B.
Barran, J.
Barry, J.
Beaumont, W. B.
Biggar, J. G.
Blake, J. A.
Blake, T.
Blane, A.
Bolton, J. C.
Bolton, T. D.
Borlase, W. C.
Bradlaugh, C.
Bright, Jacob
Bright, W. L.
Broadhurst, H.
Brown, A. L.
Bruce, hon. R. P.
Bryce, J.
Burt, T.
Buxton, S. C.
Byrne, G. M.
Cameron, C.
Cameron, J. M.
Campbell, Sir G.
Campbell, H.
Campbell-Bannerman, right hon. H.
Carew, J. L.
Chance, P. A.
Channing, F. A.
Childers, right hon. H. C. E.
Clancy, J. J.
Clark, Dr. G. B.
Cobb, H. P.
Cohen, A.
Coleridge, hon. B.
Colman, J. J.
Commins, A.
Condon, T. J.
Connolly, L.
Conway, M.
Conybeare, C. A. V.
Corbet, W. J.
Cossham, H.
Cox, J. R.
Cozens-Hardy, H. H.
Craig, J.
Crawford, D.
Crawford, W.
Cremer, W. R.
Crilly, D.
Crossley, E.
Davies, W.
Deasy, J.
Dillon, J.
Dillwyn, L. L.
Dodds, J.
Duff, R. W.
Ellis, J.
Ellis, J. E.
Ellis, T. E.
Esmonde, Sir T. H. G.
Esslemont, P.
Evershed, S.
Farquharson, Dr. R.
Fenwick, C.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro-
Finucane, J.
Flower, C.
Flynn, J. C.
Foley, P. J.
Foljambe, C. G. S.
Forster, Sir C.
Forster, Sir W. B.
Fowler, rt. hon. H. H.
Fox, Dr. J. F.
Fry, T.
Fuller, G. P.
Gane, J. L.
Gardner, H.
Gaskell, C. G. Milnes-
Gilhooly, J.
Gill, H. J.
Gill, T. P.
Gladstone, rt. hn. W. E.
Gladstone, H. J.
Gourley, E. T.
Graham, R. C.
Gray, E. D.
Grey, Sir E.
Gully, W. C.
Haldane, R. B.
Hanbury-Tracy, hon. F. S. A.
Harcourt, rt. hn. Sir W. G. V. V.
Harrington, E.
Harrington, T. C.
Harris, M.
Hayden, L. P.
Hayne, C. Seale-
Healy, M.
Holden, I.
Hooper, J.
Howell, G.
Hoyle, I.
Hunter, W. A.
Illingworth, A.
Jacoby, J. A.
James, hon. W. H.
James, C. H.
Joicey, J.
Jordan, J.
Kay-Shuttleworth, rt. hon. Sir U. J.
Kennedy, E. J.
Kenny, C. S.
Kenny, J. E.
Kenny, M. J.
Kilcoursie, right hon Viscount
Labouchere, H.
Lacaita, C. C.
Lalor, R.
Lane, W. J.
Lawson, H. L. W.
Leahy, J.
Leake, R.
Lefevre, rt. hn. G. J. S.
Lewis, T. P.
Lockwood, F.
Lyell, L.
Macdonald, W. A.
MacInnes, M.
Mac Neill, J. G. S.
M'Arthur, A.
M'Cartan, M.
M'Carthy, J.
M'Carthy, J. H.
M'Donald, P.
M'Donald, Dr. R.
M'Ewan, W.
M'Kenna, Sir J. N.
M'Laren, W. S. B.
Mahony, P.
Maitland, W. F.
Mappin, Sir F. T.
Marum, E. M.
Mason, S.
Mayne, T.
Menzies, R. S.
Molloy, B. C.
Montagu, S.
Morgan, rt. hon. G. O.
Morgan, O. V.
Morley, rt. hon. J.
Mundella, rt. hn. A. J.
Murphy, W. M.
Neville, R.
Newnes, G.
Nolan, Colonel J. P.
Nolan, J.
O'Brien, J. F. X.
O'Brien, P.
O'Brien, P. J.
O'Connor, A.
O'Connor, J. (Kerry)
O'Connor, J. (Tippry.)
O'Connor, T. P.
O'Doherty, J. E.

O'Hanlon, T.
O'Hea, P.
O'Kelly, J.
Palmer, Sir C. M.
Parker, C. S.
Parnell, C. S.
Paulton, J. M.
Peacock, R.
Pease, Sir J. W.
Pease, A. E.
Pease, H. F.
Pickard, B.
Pickersgill, E. H.
Picton, J. A.
Pinkerton, J.
Playfair, rt. hon. Sir L.
Plowden, Sir W. C.
Portman, hon. E. B.
Potter, T. B.
Powell, W.R. H.
Power, P. J.
Power, R.
Price, T. P.
Priestley, B.
Provand, A. D.
Pugh, D.
Pyne, J. D.
Rathbone, W.
Redmond, J. E.
Redmond, W. H. K.
Reed, Sir E. J.
Reid, R. T.
Rendel, S.
Reynolds, W. J.
Roberts, J.
Roberts, J. B.
Robertson, E.
Robinson, T.
Roe, T.
Roscoe, Sir H. E.
Rowlands, J.
Rowlands, W. B.
Rowntree, J.
Russell, Sir C.
Russell, E. R.
Samuelson, Sir B.
Schwann, C. E.
Sexton, T.
Shaw, T.
Sheehan, J. D.
Sheehy, D.
Sheil, E.
Shirley, W. S.
Smith, S.
Spencer, hon. C. R.
Stack, J.
Stanhope, hon. P. J.
Stansfeld, right hon. J.
Stepney-Cowell, Sir A. K.
Stevenson, F. S.
Stevenson, J. C.
Storey, S.
Stuart, J.
Sullivan, D.
Sullivan, T. D.
Summers, W.
Sutherland, A.
Swinburne, Sir J.
Talbot, C. R. M.
Tanner, C. K.
Thomas, A.
Tuite, J.
Vivian, Sir H. H.
Waddy, S. D.
Wallace, R.
Wardle, H.
Warmington, C. M.
Watt, H.
Wayman, T.
Whitbread, S.
Will, J. S.
Williams, A. J.
Williamson, J.
Williamson, S.
Wilson, C. H.
Wilson, H. J.
Wilson, I.
Winterbotham, A. B.
Woodall, W.
Woodhead, J.
Wright, C.
Yeo, F. A.

TELLERS.
Marjoribanks, rt. hon. E.
Morley, A.

Main Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

JUSTICES JURISDICTION BILL [*Lords.*]

(*Mr. Lockwood.*)

[BILL 207.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Lockwood.*)

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co. Mid): I wish, at this advanced hour, in the fewest possible words to say that at the present time it is, in my opinion, distinctly unadvisable to extend this Bill to Ireland, and that it ought to be confined to England, Scotland, and Wales. I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Lockwood) will consent to adopt that view of the subject.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board, under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by the "Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the parishes of Birtley, Carlton Little, Cockerington North, Cockerington South, Ludford Magna, Ludford Parva, Reston North, Swaby, Theddlethorpe All Saints, and Theddlethorpe Saint Helen's; and to the Townships of Bagby, Belleau, Chollerton, Dalton, and Louth Park, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 226.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (POOR LAW) (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm certain Orders of the Local Government Board, under the provisions of "The Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act, 1876," as amended and extended by "The Poor Law Act, 1879," relating to the Parishes of Asterby, Cowbit, Curdworth, Dalderby, Durston, Goulceby, Langton, Lyng, Mareham-le-Fen, Pinchbeck, Revesby, Scrivelsby, Spalding, Tattershall, Thimbleby, Thornton, and Woodhall; to the Township of Tattershall Thorpe; and to the Hamlet of Minworth, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 227.]

DUKE OF CONNAUGHT'S LEAVE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. William Henry Smith, Bill to enable His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught to return to England for a limited time, for the purpose of being present at the celebration of Her Majesty's Jubilee, without thereby resigning his command in Bombay, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Secretary Stanhope, and Sir John Gorst.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 228.]

HABITUAL DRUNKARDS ACT (1879) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Cameron, Bill to amend "The Habitual Drunkards Act, 1879," *ordered* to be brought in by Dr. Cameron, Sir Lyon Playfair, Sir Trevor Lawrence, and Sir Walter Foster.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 229.]

House adjourned at Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 19*th April*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) (63).

Committee—Report—Merchant Shipping (Fishing Boats) Acts Amendment* (51); Isle of Man (Customs)* (56).

Third Reading — Army (Annual)* (55), and *passed.*

Provisional Order Bill—*Second Reading*—Local Government (Ireland) (Limerick Water)* (42).

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.

(*The Lord Privy Seal, Earl Cadogan.*)

(no. 63.) second reading.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl Cadogan), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, that the primary object of the measure was to effect arrangements which would render it unnecessary to fill up the vacancy in the Irish Court of Common Pleas caused by the elevation of Chief Justice Morris. The Bill would abolish the office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas Division, and substitute a Puisne Judge for the Chief Justice. It provided, in similar manner, that when a vacancy should occur in the office of Chief Baron of the Exchequer, that office should also be abolished, and that a Puisne Judge should be substituted in place of the Chief Baron. The two Divisions would be merged in the Queen's Bench Division; the merger operating immediately in the case of the Court of Common Pleas, and in the case of the Exchequer on the occurrence of a vacancy in the office of Chief Baron. Two or three years ago Mr. Childers had introduced in "another place" a measure for the re-adjustment of judicial offices in Ireland. That measure had a larger scope than the present one, and it was the intention of the Government to legislate upon its lines when a fitting opportunity should present itself. In the meanwhile, he would ask the House to read the present Bill a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Privy Seal.*)

Lord DENMAN, in moving, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, that if it were passed, it would have results analogous to those effected in this country by the Judicature Act, which, he affirmed, had not been a success. As the result of the abolition of the old Courts great confusion had been introduced into the cause lists, and, in consequence, suitors in England never knew what their exact position was. He feared that similar inconvenience would be caused in Ireland by the abolition of the old distinctions between the Courts. It would also interfere with the dispensation of patronage. The present system had worked well; and he felt it to be his duty to oppose the Bill, and to point out evils which would follow from its passing into law. At all events, such a measure ought not to be passed until the office of Chief Baron became vacant.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and insert ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

Lord FITZGERALD said, he would suggest that the Commitee stage should not be taken before Friday. The measure, which went much further than was originally intended, and provided for the assimilation of the judicature of Ireland—and created a large Queen's Bench Division—to that of England, was right in principle, and he hoped his noble Friend (Lord Denman) would not persevere with his Amendment.

Earl SPENCER said, he thought that this question of law reform in Ireland was a very important one. It was a field in which Her Majesty's Government might do very large and useful work. As far as he understood the Bill, it met with his entire approval; for it really put the Law Divisions in Ireland in the same position in which they were now placed in this country. He should have been glad if the measure had gone rather further in the direction of the Bill introduced in 1885 in the House of Commons by one of his Colleagues, and he thought that in Committee the Government could with advantage consent to its amendment. However, he accepted the assurance of his noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal, that Her Majesty's Government were not disposed to oppose proposals to carry law reform in Ireland still further.

Lord DENMAN said, he objected to the abolition of these offices in England, and still retained his opinions. He, however, would withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Motion *agreed to;* Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Friday* next.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.

QUESTION.

Earl SPENCER asked, Whether the rumour that the Government would propose the second reading of this important Bill on Thursday next had any foundation? There seemed to be some doubt about it.

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl Cadogan), in reply, said, that it was his intention to move the second reading of the Bill upon Thursday next.

RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC BILL.

Lord BRABOURNE said, that as the second reading of the Irish Land Bill stood first for Thursday, the Railway Traffic Bill could not come on at a convenient hour on the same night, and he would ask his noble Friend in charge of the Bill to fix it for a time when it could be fairly discussed.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Lord Stanley of Preston) said, that it had been his intention to take the Report of Amendments stage of this Bill upon Thursday next; but as the second reading of the Irish Land Law Bill would be taken upon that evening, he would postpone the Report upon this Bill until Tuesday next.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 19*th April*, 1887.

QUESTIONS.

THE CIVIL SERVICE—APPOINTMENTS IN THE PUBLIC DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether Mr. Bernard Mallet, who was appointed to a situation in the Treasury in 1885, is the same gentleman who entered the Foreign Office by a limited competitive examination, after nomination, in 1882; and whether he was transferred to the Treasury without further competitive examination; whether Mr. E. G. King-Harman, who was appointed to a situation in the Home Office in 1886, is the same Mr. King-Harman who entered the Admiralty Office in 1886, after competitive examination; and whether his transfer to the Home Office took place without any further competitive examination; whether it is a fact that Mr. King-Harman was third on the list in the competitive examination; and whether the gentleman who was second on the list in the same competitive examination was left in the Office of the Board of Trade; and whether the situations in the Office of the Board of Trade are inferior to those in the Home Office in immediate salary and in future prospects; whether Mr. F. S. Parry entered the Office of the Board of Trade in 1885, being second on the list in the competitive examination, and was appointed in 1886 to a situation in the Treasury without further competitive examination; and whether the gentleman who was first on the list in the same competitive examination was left in the Office of the Board of Trade; and whether the situations in the Office of the Board of Trade are inferior to those in the Treasury in immediate salary and in future prospects; whether Mr. J. M. Dodds entered the Post Office in 1885, being seventh on the list in the competitive examination, and was appointed in 1886 to a situation in the Office of the Board of Trade without further competitive examination; and whether the gentlemen who were fourth and fifth respectively at the same competitive examination were left in the Post Office; and whether the situations in the Post Office are inferior to those in the Office of the Board of Trade in immediate salary and in future prospects; whether it is the case that every vacancy in the Treasury and all but one in the Home Office, for the last two years have been filled by the transfer of gentlemen from other Offices without further competitive examination; and whether, if such transfers had not taken place, there would have been vacant for competitive examination in December, 1886, a situation in the Treasury, with salary beginning at £250 a-year, and also a situation in the Home Office, with salary beginning at £200 a-year; and whether the best appointment actually vacant at that time was one with salary beginning at £100 a-year; and, whether he can inform the House what were the definite reasons for which the Chiefs of Department and the Lords of the Treasury considered it to be for the public interest that competitive examination should be dispensed with in filling any or all of such vacancies by the transference of gentlemen from other Offices; and, whether he will assure the House that his influence will be exerted to prevent such transfers being made, except upon clear and sufficient grounds, and solely with a view for the promotion of the public interest?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I understand that the circumstances of the transfers from one Office to another of the gentlemen named are substantially correct. The last two vacancies in the Treasury were filled by the transfer from other Departments of the gentlemen named in the hon. Gentleman's Question. The Order in Council of 1870 dealing with competition reserves to Departments power to transfer to vacancies as well as to fill them by open competition. Since the passing of that Order, there have been 10 appointments to second-class clerkships in the Treasury. Seven of them have been filled by open competition, and three by transfer. I am informed that former Heads of the Treasury thought it advisable to exercise occasionally the power of transfer, so as to obtain the services of men after a certain degree of trial as officials. I believe that such transfers were made with a sole view to the public interest; and, as far as I am concerned, I readily give my assurance to the hon. Member that I shall not favour transfer except upon clear and sufficient grounds, and solely with a view to the promotion of the public interest. But I may add, for the information of the hon. Member and the House, what has been written to me by the Secretary of the Civil Service Commission, who says—

> "As to the grounds on which the several transfers were made we have no information, our functions in such cases being limited to ascertaining and certifying that the transferee possesses the qualifications required for situations of the class to which he is to be appointed. On the question of the policy of such transfers, it would hardly be within our province to express any opinion; but we may be allowed to point out that they were strongly recommended by the Playfair Commission—see page 18 of their first Report, paragraph on, 'Recruiting of Superior Departments.' It is clear, even from that paragraph alone, that the Head of the superior Department was intended to select, on his own responsibility, the person whom he thought fittest to be transferred, without regard to the place he might have taken in the entrance examination; but if there were any doubt it would be removed by what is said on page 12, as to the method in which original appointments should be made—more particularly in the last two paragraphs on that page."

The hon. Member will, therefore, see that these transfers, as carried out, formed part of the system of competition adopted. I gather from one paragraph in the Question, asking whether a certain number of Offices would not have been open to competition if these transfers had not been made, that one of the points in the Question, and the suggestion that has led to it, is that there is a certain vested right on the part of those who are going to enter the Public Service that no clerkships should be filled up except by open competition. On the part of the Public Service, I must entirely repudiate any such idea; the interest of the Public Service alone has to be considered. I must add that I consider it inadmissible to maintain that after persons have once entered the Public Service the transfers are to be guided by their original marks, and not by the aptitude which has been shown in the appointments they have held.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE POST OFFICE, RATHMINES ROAD, DUBLIN, AND "THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL."

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that the Post Office, Rathmines Road, Dublin, is also the local office of *The Freeman's Journal*; whether it is a fact that cartoons of that newspaper, ridiculing the Government and designating the Chief Secretary for Ireland "the latest Cromwell," have been displayed side by side with Post Office notices; and, whether this is in accordance with the Post Office Regulations; and if not, what course does he propose to take in the matter?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The Post Office Receiver in Rathmines Road, Dublin, is, I understand, agent for the sale of *The Freeman's Journal;* but I cannot ascertain that cartoons of that journal have at any time been exhibited side by side with Post Office notices. The Post Office business, I am assured, is kept quite separate and distinct from the business of the shop.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I may inform the right. hon. Gentleman that I have myself seen the cartoons side by side with Post Office notices.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether there is anything more incongruous in it than the sporting of primroses by the Members of Her Majesty's Government on the Treasury Bench to-day?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, whether the tenant of a shop in which the business of a Post Office is conducted is not entitled, under law and under the Post Office Regulations, to conduct any other lawful business?

Mr. RAIKES: The hon. Member must be aware that it is clearly competent to any person in that position to conduct any other lawful business. I merely referred to the fact that the business must be kept distinct from Post Office notices.

WAR OFFICE (ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT)—THE MAXIM MACHINE-GUN.

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Surveyor General of the Ordnance, Whether the trials made with the new Maxim machine-gun have proved that gun to be superior to any kind of machine-gun at present in existence; whether the Government purchased three of these guns in the month of February last, and what has been their destination; and, whether, in view of the fact that Foreign Governments are largely buying these Maxim guns, Her Majesty's Government will consider the advisability of giving orders for more guns of this pattern, to supersede the manufacture of Nordenfelt guns, which are still being made in spite of the Report of the Select Committee of May, 1881, which placed the Nordenfelt inferior to the Gardner?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL (Mr. H. S. Northcote) (Exeter): The trials with the Maxim machine gun, which have hitherto been under the direct supervision of the inventor, have been sufficiently promising to justify the purchase of three for trial on board Her Majesty's ship *Excellent*, under conditions more nearly approaching those of actual warfare. The question of further orders of Maxim guns cannot be decided until these trials have conclusively demonstrated their serviceability. Nearly the whole of the Nordenfelt guns which have been ordered during the last 12 months have been ordered for the Admiralty at their special request; the orders given by the War Office for guns of this class for land service have been almost entirely for Gardner guns.

BORNEO—AGGRESSIONS OF THE RAJAH OF SARAWAK.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) had the following Question on the Paper:—To ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, What further official information has been received from the Consul General of Brunei, concerning the forcible seizure of the Limbang River by the Rajah of Sarawak, against the formal protests of the Natives and Native authorities in that district; and, what steps Her Majesty's Government propose taking in the matter?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The House will, perhaps, allow me to answer this Question though not put. It has been on the Paper very often, and yesterday the hon. Member postponed it in my presence, and I think it ought to be disposed of. The official information from the Consul General is that no such thing happened. I may, however, state that news has been received by telegraph that the natives of the Limbang District have attacked Brunei.

WAR OFFICE—SUICIDE OF J. F. CONOLLY, A WAR OFFICE DRAFTSMAN.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the circumstances set out in the following report of 12th April:—

> "An inquiry made yesterday by Mr. Langham, Coroner for the Duchy of Lancaster, reveals a sad case of suicide of a War Office draftsman, named James Francis Conolly, aged 59, of Offerton Road, Clapham. It transpired at the inquiry that in January last the deceased received notice that he would be discharged at the end of April. He had been in the Horse Guards branch of the War Office for nearly 30 years, and since he had received notice, through the cutting down of the Estimates, he had been very depressed. On Thursday it was intimated that he would get no superannuation allowance, and in a fit of depression on Sunday night he cut his throat with a razor.—A verdict of Temporary Insanity was returned;"

whether any communication had been received at the War Office from the Treasury that Conolly was to receive a year's salary on his discharge in addition to his ordinary pay; and, whether he was informed of this; and, if not, why he was kept in ignorance that any provision would be made for him?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford) (who replied) said, that Mr. Conolly had been suffering from depression. He was aware at the time that he was not entitled to a pension, and that an application had been made to the Treasury for a grant on his discharge, which was to take place in consequence of the curtailment of the Estimates. The application was granted, and Mr. Conolly was to receive a year's salary in addition to his ordinary pay; but he was not informed of that before his death, because his service had been extended for two months.

THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE — THE DIRECTION AND CONTROL.

Colonel HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to place the affairs and funds of the Imperial Institute for direction and control in the hands of the gentlemen who had the conduct of the various South Kensington Exhibitions?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): My hon. and gallant Friend cannot have noticed the answer which I gave on a former occasion with regard to the Imperial Institute. Her Majesty's Government are not in any way responsible for, or in any way mixed up with, the management of the Imperial Institute. It is an entirely independent affair, under the control and direction, in the first instance, of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. We are, therefore, quite unable to give any assurance as to the way in which the management shall be conducted, or as to the officers who may be employed to carry it out; and I think it would be almost impertinence on our part if we were to seek to exercise any influence over an Institute to which no Government funds of any kind, no funds under the control of the House of Commons, are intended to be contributed.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked, whether any of the accounts of any of the Exhibitions held under Royal Commissioners had been audited and published?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, that he had been informed that the accounts had been audited; but he had no personal knowledge of the fact.

EDUCATION (WALES).

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If, before the Chancellor of the Exchequer disposes of his surplus, the Government will make some provision for technical education, local Colleges, and Welsh intermediate education?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): Though the right hon. Gentleman put this Question on the Paper last night, I saw it for the first time only a few hours ago, and he must be aware that I have had no opportunity of consulting with my Colleagues who are specially responsible for the expenditure. The Government are very conscious of the importance of this business; but I am not able to assure the right hon. Gentleman that a provision in excess of that made in the ordinary Estimates can be made by Supplementary Estimates in the course of the present financial year. I can assure him, however, that the question itself will receive the serious attention of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. MUNDELLA asked, whether it was intended to proceeed with the question of Welsh intermediate education, for which a grant was promised in 1885, and a Bill respecting which he (Mr. Mundella) had laid on the Table?

Mr. W. H. SMITH repeated that he had had no opportunity of conferring with his Colleagues on the subject.

Mr. MUNDELLA said, he would repeat the Question on Thursday.

PARLIAMENT—PRIVILEGE—ALLEGED FORGERY OF A LETTER—MR. PARNELL AND THE "TIMES."

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to put a Question to you, Sir, affecting a matter of Privilege. A statement is current in the public Press that a certain forged letter, a facsimile of which appeared in *The Times* of yesterday, had been for some time in the possession of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell). As the matter is one which affects the veracity of an hon. Member of this House in respect to a statement made by him in this House in the discharge of his duty, I wish to know whether I am not entitled to ascertain from the hon. Member for South Tyrone whether the forged letter was in his possession; how it came into his possession; and if it passed directly from him to the Editor of *The Times ?*

Mr. SPEAKER: Certainly. I think it is, under the circumstances, competent for the hon. Member to put that Question in order to elicit information.

Mr. SEXTON: Then, Sir, I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Tyrone, If it is true that a document, of which a facsimile copy appeared in *The Times* of yesterday, was at any time in his possession; and, if so, from whom he received it—[*Cries of* "Oh!" *from the Ministerial Benches*]—and if it passed directly from him to the Editor of *The Times ?*

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I desire to say that the paragraph which appears in an evening paper is a pure concoction from beginning to end. Apart from the fact that some time ago it came to my knowledge that there was such a correspondence, there is not a word of truth in the paragraph.

Mr. SEXTON: The hon. Member has spoken of a correspondence, whereas my Question simply related to a document. May I ask him what the correspondence is to which he refers?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: As far as the document is concerned, there is not a word of truth in the paragraph in question.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) asked, What the Business of the House would be on Thursday and Friday ?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will introduce the Budget on Thursday, and on Friday the ordinary Business will be proceeded with.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked, what would be the Business on Monday next?

Mr. W. H. SMITH said, the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill was put down for Committee on Monday next; but it had been represented to him that he engaged that a week should elapse between the Second Reading and the Committee stage, and that a week could not be said to have elapsed between Tuesday morning at 2 o'clock and Monday afternoon at 4 o'clock. He should have thought that a Parliamentary week would have elapsed; but he wished to keep the most strict faith with hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite; and if it were their view that he had not complied with the engagement into which he came by putting the Committee stage down for Monday, he would say Tuesday for that stage, and they should proceed on Monday with Supply.

MOTIONS

—o—

HARBOURS OF REFUGE.

RESOLUTION.

Mr. YEO (Glamorgan, Gower): I rise, Sir, for the purpose of moving the Resolution which stands in my name on the Paper—

> "That, having regard to the recent fearful sacrifice of life in the Bristol Channel, and to the constantly recurring losses of life and property around the coasts of the United Kingdom, it is, in the opinion of this House, urgent that Her Majesty's Government should immediately take action to diminish these losses by the construction of suitable Harbours of Refuge."

I think, Sir, that no apology is needed for occupying the valuable time of this House by calling attention to this question. There is no subject which could more properly occupy the attention of the House than one which affects the seamen of this country, and I may say, without fear of contradiction, that there is no class of our fellow-countrymen which has greater claims upon our consideration than our seamen. In the first place, we are mainly dependent on them for our national prosperity and existence. Our seamen are exposed to greater peril than any other class of the community; and from the very nature of their calling, they are, politically speaking, more defenceless than any other of our industrial classes. Happily, Sir, this question has never been made a shuttlecock of by political Parties. Whatever there may have been of past neglect, or past supineness, no one Government can be specially blamed —all are alike responsible; but I am gratified to observe that more than one Member of Her Majesty's Government is named among the supporters of a society entitled "The National Refuge Harbours Society." I augur, from that fact, that they are not opposed to the Motion which I am now proposing. Among the names included in the long and distinguished list of supporters of the National Refuge Harbours Society I find those of the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary to the Board of Trade, and many others. I trust that the Division which may take place to-night will have such a result as will strengthen and encourage Her Majesty's Government to take action in this important matter, with which I am justified in entertaining the belief that they sympathize. I should like, in the first place, to state that the subject with which I propose to deal in this Motion does not relate to commercial ports and fishing harbours, although they, no doubt, constitute a very important branch of the subject. The extension and improvement of these ports and harbours is an extremely important matter; but the object to which I desire to direct the attention of the House, and which forms the subject of my Motion, is more immediately concerned in the construction of National Harbours of Refuge, which, in order to be effectual, must, in many cases, be placed at points around the coast where no local trade exists, or, indeed, can be created. I would not for a moment disparage the importance of commercial ports, or the importance of fishing harbours—I know how very much depends upon them. I am aware that local enterprize has done, and is doing, a good deal in that direction; and I am glad also to know that successive Governments have offered some help in the way of loans and otherwise in order to help forward the development of those ports, and the improvement of such harbours. As I have said, the object which I advocate is more particularly the construction of National Harbours of Refuge, and those harbours would have to be made at points of danger where probably there is not, and never will be, a sufficient amount of trade to justify any Local Authority in taking the matter in hand. They have no resources within themselves. The question has been repeatedly brought before Parliament in past years. As long ago as 1836, a Select Committee was appointed to consider the question of the safety of our seamen. Again, in 1843, and in 1857 and 1858, other Select Committees were appointed for the same purpose. In 1859 a Royal Commission was appointed, and that Royal Commission, as many hon. Members know, went round the different parts of the United Kingdom, held public meetings, obtained information from experts and others, and made an exhaustive inquiry into the subject of Harbours of Refuge. We have their Report, which is a very valuable contribution upon the subject. The most recent Committee which has sat in reference to the question is the one which was presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks). That Committee sat in the years 1883 and 1884, and the Report of the Committee is, on the whole, confirmatory of the Report of the Royal Commission. In looking at all these Reports—I do not propose to weary the House by reading more than a very short extract from them—I can safely make two assertions. They all agree in stating that there is a great loss of life going on all round our coasts which might be prevented. They also agree that want of Harbours of Refuge has had a good deal to do in bringing about that result. I only propose to make one quotation from the Report of the last Committee. That Committee stated as follows:—

> "Your Committee wish to express, in the strongest terms, their conviction of the absolute necessity that no further delay should take

place in the construction of the National Harbours of Refuge, to which they have alluded."

This Report also deprecates any delay in seeking to utilize the employment of convict labour, and the Committee use these words—

> "Your Committee desire to point out the inexpediency of further delay in the execution and completion of the harbours originally planned in order to provide the convicts with employment for an extended time."

From this Report I gather that in the years which ensued between 1836 to 1843 the loss of life averaged 830. When the Royal Commission presented their Report they placed the loss of life at 780 between the years 1852 and 1856, and the more recent Report of the Select Committee of 1883 and 1884 places the loss of life at 728. The latest Return for 1884 gives the loss of life at 661. So that we have a decrease from 830 in the earlier years to 661 in the most recent year for which a Report has been issued. As regards the loss of property, it is extremely difficult to obtain anything of a reliable character, because there are no official documents in existence in regard to it; but I observe that in the Report of the Committee of 1859 an estimate is given of the loss of property on and around the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland, and I find that it was there fixed at £1,500,000 a-year. The Royal Commission which sat in a subsequent year confirmed that estimate. The decrease in the loss of life is an exceedingly satisfactory feature, and it is probably attributable, to a large extent, to the fact that lifeboat institutions have become more efficient than they were formerly. Lifeboats in a far greater number have been placed at different points around the coast, and there have also been considerable improvements in the Shipping Law consequent on the Plimsoll agitation. The result of that agitation has been to render the owners of vessels much more careful as to the loading of their ships, and how they are manned and equipped. These are gratifying circumstances; but these Reports give no definite indication of the sites at which these Harbours of Refuge should be placed. The Royal Commission was specially appointed in 1883 to determine and recommend what sites should be chosen; but they did not fulfil that part of their duty, and all we have at present is a general indication as to what neighbourhoods would be most suitable for the construction of Harbours of Refuge. We have, in the Report, a general recommendation in regard to the West Coast of Ireland; and we have, also, the recommendation of a site for the East Coast of England—I think, Filey. There is also a recommendation that a National Harbour of Refuge should be constructed in the Bristol Channel; and it is more particularly in reference to the Bristol Channel that I desire to call the attention of the House at this moment. The trade of the Bristol Channel has enormously increased in recent years. The development of the steam coal trade in Cardiff, Newport, and Swansea has given an enormous impetus to the trade of the Bristol Channel, and its volume is much greater than it was a few years ago. More than that, it is increasing, and is likely to increase very greatly within a few years of the present time. That Channel is, undoubtedly, an extremely dangerous one for navigation. The losses which occur there are frequent. The coast, both on the Northern and the Southern sides, is iron-bound, and affords very little protection in case of storm. I have no wish to dogmatize on this point; but I believe that if there is one place where a Harbour of Refuge is needed more than another, every independent authority will tell you that it is the Bristol Channel. At the same time, a great necessity exists all around our coasts for such harbours. Perhaps I may be allowed to call attention to the disasters which occurred in the Bristol Channel last winter. They were exceptionally severe. The loss of life was doubtless above the average; but yet, what was the actual extent of the loss of life? I have ascertained that more than 50 vessels were lost during three months, and that, at least, from 350 to 400 lives were sacrificed in that time. It must not be supposed that the vessels that were lost were vessels of a bad description, or of a low class. I have been at some pains to ascertain the character of the vessels, and I find that the bulk of them were of the highest class, well-equipped, well-found, and well-manned. Nevertheless, a few days after they left port they were caught in a storm, were unable to weather it, and foundered with all hands for want of a Harbour of Refuge. In the neighbourhood of the Bristol Channel there is only one opinion on this point, and that is that if a single Harbour of Refuge had been in existence many of these vessels and lives would have been saved. Upon that matter I think there can be no doubt. I have no intention of indicating any particular site in the Bristol Channel. That is no part of my province; but I could quote letters which refer to different sites from gentlemen in the neighbourhood who are fully competent to form an opinion, and who say that if there had been a Harbour of Refuge at some point or other, a large number of these lives and vessels would have been saved. I do not intend to imply that the loss every year is as high as it was during the past winter; but every year there is a large number of lives lost there and elsewhere upon our coasts. It is a matter of gratification to find that the loss of life is not increasing, but decreasing; but, at the same time, it is still appalling in its character and extent. I do not think that we have a right to fold our arms and stand idly by when we know that this loss of life might be prevented. If the loss were inevitable, we might wash our hands of the responsibility, and simply regret that so great a loss of valuable lives should occur from year to year which we were powerless to prevent. But what are the facts of the case? We have it upon the highest authority—namely, the Royal Commission, and these Select Committees on Harbours of Refuge, that if a proper course were adopted, and Harbours of Refuge were constructed, this loss of life would be largely diminished. I would venture to say, further, that not only have we this official judgment and these Reports of Parliamentary Committees dealing with the matter, but the whole consensus of nautical opinion is confirmatory of the Reports. We may naturally ask, therefore, what is it that stops the way? There is urgent necessity for something being done. All are agreed that a large portion of the loss might be prevented. Last year a right hon. Gentleman high in office delivered a speech, in which he talked of the difficulties which existed in regard to the selection of particular sites. I looked upon that as a frivolous excuse, applied, as it was, to so momentous a question. He talked of the great conflict of opinion among local persons in the neighbourhood of the suggested sites. He said that they could not agree among themselves; and therefore, forsooth, the Government were justified in delaying to take action in the matter. My opinion is, that the last persons to be consulted in a matter of this kind are the persons who live in the towns or ports in the neighbourhood of the suggested sites of Harbours of Refuge. I think that local jealousies, local differences, or preferences, or prejudices, should be utterly ignored. What we want is that an impartial tribunal should be appointed with power to decide the question as to the best practicable points for the construction of Harbours of Refuge. Although it may not be an easy matter to find that tribunal, yet I do not believe that there is such a lack of honourable men that the Trinity Board or the Board of Trade could nominate one that might be relied upon to deal justly and fairly with the matter. Of course, such a tribunal would hear all the evidence which local people could supply, and would hear all the testimony in favour of particular sites; and, having heard the whole of the evidence, and thoroughly sifted it, it would be for such tribunal to determine, on national grounds, where the greatest amount of good would be effected, and the greatest loss of life and property prevented. It is almost wholly upon that ground, without reference to the question of trade, that the sites should be selected for the construction of such Harbours of Refuge. There is another question in connection with the sites which appears to be one of some difficulty — namely, the suggestion that the locality where the site is selected should make a large contribution towards the cost. If that principle is adopted, it will undoubtedly, in my opinion, tend to create a great deal of difficulty. If you expect that the locality shall contribute towards the expense, you may find yourselves in this position. I presume that the tribunal which would have the decision of the question would be an impartial tribunal, and that any given point which it might determine upon for the construction of a Harbour of Refuge would, in its opinion, be most effectual for the purpose, from a national point of view; but suppose that the locality was unable, or declined to make a contribution, are you, in that case, to put the Harbour of Refuge in a worse position? My contention is, that you should put it in the place which would best serve the national interests, and should not grudge the locality any of the advantages it might possibly obtain, but which, in reality, Nature has conferred upon it. I grant that, if there were two sites absolutely equal in regard to the advantages they present for the construction of a Harbour of Refuge, the Government would be justified in allowing one to outbid the other. Another reason for the long delay which has occurred is that there is still a lingering doubt in the minds of some Gentlemen, even high in authority, that these Harbours of Refuge, after all, are not going to do the good expected from them. But if you consult nautical authorities, you will not get that opinion; if you go to our sailors you will not find them back up that view, and they are certainly the persons most interested; if you consult the pilots—and I do not know an authority more competent to give an intelligent and sound opinion—they will not support that view; but they will tell you that Harbours of Refuge are of supreme importance for securing the safety of lives and property, and it is only inexperienced landsmen and theorists with no practical knowledge who will express the opinion that Harbours of Refuge are of no use except for purposes of trade. No scheme was ever yet suggested that it was impossible to find some person to oppose. The noblest project is sure to have some detractors. For instance, when the erection of lighthouses was first proposed, they were objected to as useless for any valuable purpose, and even some of the authorities were induced to take that view. Petitions, however, were got up by the seamen in favour of the erection of lighthouses on the North and South Foreland, on the ground that they would be a protection for them from the dangers of the Goodwin Sands; but the reply of the Trinity House was that there was no necessity for any legislation of the kind, and that the erection of the suggested lighthouses would be of no use in enabling the ships to avoid the dangers that were pointed out. What conclusion are we to draw from that fact, if it is not that those who are most concerned are better able to judge than mere theorists? Who but a madman would suggest that these lighthouses are of no use at the present moment; and who but a madman would suggest that these lights should be put out? In the case of Harbours of Refuge we have the judgment of the House as it has been given by responsible and reliable Committees, and we have their emphatic recommendation to do a certain thing. Until that judgment is reversed we are honourably bound by the recommendation we have before us from so high an authority. Another difficulty, no doubt, is the natural unwillingness of any Government to enter into any expenditure of the public money, unless they feel themselves thoroughly backed up by public opinion, and they can only be compelled to take action by the pressure of public opinion. But I will venture to say that there is a growing feeling throughout the country upon this question at the present time. There is a strong conviction that we are not doing justice to our seamen. They are men to whom we owe a great deal. Their avocation is a highly perilous one, and we do not do all that lies in our power to reduce the perils they have to encounter to a minimum. I think there is an awakening of the public conscience in reference to our sailors and to our duty towards them. I find that large public meetings have been held in different inland as well as seaport towns, at which resolutions have been passed in favour of prompt action in this matter of the construction of Harbours of Refuge. I find that in the Trades Union Congress—a representative Body—resolutions were passed of a similar character. The United Chambers of Commerce, also a representative Body, representing to a large extent the commercial intelligence of the country, at three of their annual meetings have successively passed resolutions not only unanimously, but enthusiastically, in favour of prompt action in the matter. They have also sent deputations to the Board of Trade in support of the prayer of their Petitions. And I am satisfied there is but one feeling, that if the Government would take heart and act in accordance with the sympathies of some of their own Colleagues, who have strongly, avowedly, and openly declared in favour of the movement—if they would only do this, they would be thoroughly backed up by public opinion. I am sure that such a decision on their part would be hailed with the greatest satisfaction throughout the whole of the country. One other reason I may refer to as the cause of delay is one which, I am sorry to say, is the strongest of all. It is this—that our sailors have no political organization, and no mouthpieces in this House. It will be found that our miners have an organization, and its influence is very great. They have even their own Representatives in this House—men who watch carefully all legislation affecting their interests, and who influence and mould that legislation. But what about our poor sailors? The shipowners are here, but there are very few who openly take a deep interest in the welfare of the sailor. We know that he is not able to bring pressure to bear upon this House as others can. He is deprived of the opportunities which other men enjoy of entering into a powerful organization, and bringing great influence to bear upon the House. Will anyone tell me that if the sailors had the same power of organization and of bringing pressure to bear upon the House of Commons, they would have been so long deprived of the benefits and privileges of the Employers' Liability Act, which is enjoyed by all other classes of the community? In my opinion, it is due entirely to the fact that they are unable to exercise such influence; that they do not possess the advantages of the Employers' Liability Act; and that the recommendations of the Royal Commission and of successive Select Committees of this House have not had effect given to them during all this long series of years. The question of the cost of these Harbours of Refuge is, no doubt, an interesting one. We heard the late President of the Board of Trade say last Session—and I think he ought to be an authority on the subject—that the highest sum he had heard mentioned as necessary for the construction of Harbours of Refuge was £6,000,000 sterling. That is, of course, a higher sum than is mentioned in any of the Reports to which I have referred; but the estimate includes the commercial ports and fishing harbours. But, taking it at that sum, the Select Committee which sat in 1883-4, and reported in the latter year, suggested that the money required for the purpose of constructing these Harbours of Refuge should be raised on Terminable Annuities, spread over 99 years. If that suggestion were adopted, what would be the yearly payment to cover the interest and pay back the principal upon £6,000,000 sterling? £250,000 a-year would do it, and leave a very fair margin for maintenance. What is the case on the other side? Apart from the saving of life, what is the estimated saving of property? The loss amounts to £1,500,000 a-year; and, according to the Report of the Committee which sat in 1858, the probable saving may be put down at 30 per cent. But taking it at no higher a figure than 20 per cent, and assuming that 20 per cent of the vessels which are now lost were saved, that 20 per cent would represent a sum of £300,000 a-year. In other words, looking at the question from a national point of view, the expenditure of £250,000 a-year would be met on the other side by a saving of £300,000. I hope I have made myself clear upon that matter. The point which I wish to present to the House is that at present the loss is £1,500,000 a-year, and that, if only 20 per cent of that loss is preventible, there would be a saving of £300,000 a-year—a sum more than sufficient to cover the entire interest on the cost of constructing the Harbours of Refuge that are asked for. It may be asked, why not place the cost upon the Consolidated Fund? I think there is a very reasonable objection to any proposal of the kind. My own conviction is that the entire cost should not come out of the Consolidated Fund, and for this reason—that the incidence of taxation would not be the same. The fact is, that these Harbours of Refuge, by saving property and life, will have a tendency to cheapen the price of imported goods; but it is not the whole of the community who have an interest in the cheapening of goods. I need only remind hon. Members of the case of the farmers. I do not think the farmers have any interest in cheapening the importation of produce, and, therefore, it would be unfair to tax them for the erection of Harbours of Refuge. There are other cases which might be mentioned, such as those of Railway Companies, and others of a similar character. Although it would be perfectly legitimate, from the national point of view, to spend some £250,000 in saving ships to the extent of £300,000, and to save in addition a large number of lives, yet it would not be altogether proper to place the whole of the expenditure upon the Consolidated Fund. It is a popular notion that the underwriters would be greatly benefited by the construction of Harbours of Refuge, and that they have some personal interest in the matter. That is altogether a mistaken notion. Of all men in this country they are the very persons who are least interested in the saving of property at sea. There can be no doubt that, being humane men, they deplore the destruction of life; but it is quite clear, on a closer view of the matter, that they are not interested personally in the saving of property, for this reason—that if we were to annihilate maritime risks we should destroy their profession. When the risks are high, the payments are high also. What they are interested in is, that there should be no fraudulent insurances; but they have no personal interest in diminishing risks and losses at sea. Then, again, as to the shipowners, it may be asked why should they not be treated like other employers of labour—the owners of factories and of collieries, and Railway Companies, who have to submit to the most stringent legislation, which compels them to take the utmost care and to go to all the necessary expense in order to prevent the loss of life? "Why," it is said, "should not the same thing be done in the case of shipping?" I should like to point out that the lighthouses around the coast are paid for out of the light dues, and, therefore, the duty of the shipowner in providing for the safety of life and property is really recognized by the State. But the light dues are only a cheap form of insurance. The light dues are imposed in return for the advantage of having lights around our coast. If the lights were put out, the shipowners would have to pay an enormous premium in the shape of insurance. Applying the analogy of the lighthouses to the case of Harbours of Refuge, I maintain that the shipowner would recoup himself by saving in insurance premiums, a very large portion, if not the whole, of what he would have to expend in Refuge Harbour dues. If £1,500,000 worth of property is lost in each year, we may be perfectly sure that that is the exact sum which is paid in insurance premiums, plus the profit of the underwriters. If £300,000 of that could be saved, there would be £300,000 less insurance premiums to be paid; because the competition among the underwriters would soon bring it down to its proper level. Therefore, it may be argued that the shipowners would be almost entirely recouped the outlay they would be required to make in the shape of Refuge Harbour dues. Let us look, on the other hand, at the obligations of the Government. One of the greatest objects to be secured by these Harbours of Refuge, we are told, consists in the making provision for naval defence, and in all probability such Harbours of Refuge would have to be made all the more strong, and the construction would be proportionately costly on that account. If that strategical consideration is to be entertained, it is a strong reason why the Government should contribute a substantial sum towards the expense. There is also another reason. I have said that the shipowners pay the light dues; but they have a grievance in regard to those dues, and that is, that the Admiralty never contribute one farthing towards the maintenance of the lighthouses. Although Her Majesty's Navy have the full advantage in navigating around these shores of the lights and lighthouses, they have never, so far, contributed one farthing towards the expense which is incurred in order to keep these lighthouses in existence. That appears to me to be most unfair, and, in my opinion, it justifies the expectation that the Consolidated Fund should make a large contribution to Harbours of Refuge as some compensation for not having paid light dues in past years. There is one other point in connection with the question of finance. I have stated that, primarily, it is the duty of the shipowner to look after the lives of his sailors; but I believe that, from a humanitarian point of view, this country will look with favour on a contribution from the National Exchequer of a considerable sum, in order to meet the expense incurred in saving the lives of our fellow-countrymen, and preventing the destruction of life and property which has been going on for so many years. While I think there is no ground why the Consolidated Fund should bear all the expense, I think, on the other hand, there are strong reasoons why this large expenditure of £250,000 a-year should be apportioned between the shipping interest and the National

Exchequer. In the Bristol Channel several sites for Harbours of Refuge have been suggested. I will not refer to them further than to mention the fact that the estimated sum for one of those sites is £400,000. The highest and most expensive estimate puts the cost at £1,500,000; but taking the least expensive of these sites, and assuming that £400,000 would be all that is necessary, £20,000 a-year would cover interest and repayment for 99 years as well as the cost of maintenance. If the National Exchequer were to pay one-half of that, the charge upon the shipping interest in connection with the navigation of the Bristol Channel would only amount to £10,000 a-year. The total trade entries and clearances in the Bristol Channel show that the registered tonnage amounts to more than £22,000,000, and one-eighth of a penny per registered ton would cover the whole cost which would devolve upon the shipping interest. One-half would be paid by the National Exchequer, and the other half would amount to about one-eighth of a penny in the pound on all vessels entered in and cleared from the Bristol Channel. Assuming that the more costly harbour were constructed which is estimated to cost £1,500,000, the cost per registered ton would be about a halfpenny on all vessels entering and clearing from the Bristol Channel. I know that the shipowners are, like other traders, passing through a time of depression, and that they are ill able to bear any additional burden; but I desire to point out that for this one-eighth of a penny per ton they would recoup themselves by the saving they would effect in insurance, and at the same time they would do their duty to their seamen; in addition to which they would have the satisfaction of knowing that their own interests were consulted at the same time. Although I have entered into these suggestions with a view of endeavouring to bring the matter to a practical issue, I do not think the Government would be induced to pay the whole sum. It would be a matter of satisfaction if they would consent to pay one-half of the cost. My Motion, however, does not even involve that. The Resolution which I submit to the House simply points out that there is a large amount of preventible loss of life, and that it is the duty of the House and of the Government to take immediate action in order to stop that loss. Surely, that is a proposition which no one can object to. If it be admitted that within the borders of the United Kingdom and immediately around there is a preventible loss going on from year to year, I think it is the bounden duty of the State to find out who is responsible for that loss—whether it is the Government or anybody else; and I maintain that it is the duty of the Government to stop the loss. We claim to be a practical and business-like nation, and we get credit for it among the Continental nations; but, I would ask, is it a business-like thing to palter with a question like this for more than a generation, and not take any practical action in the matter? I think it is almost incredible that this important question should have been delayed so long. I suppose that we should, as a nation, resent the imputation of being grossly inhumane. But, Sir, we are scarcely innocent of such a charge. I remember a case of a little child being drowned in one of the parks, when not one of the bystanders would wet his clothes in order to save that child. The Press commented in strong terms upon the gross inhumanity of the act. But we are doing something very like it now. Are we not lookers-on at that life and death struggle which is going on round our coasts? We have the power of doing something towards stopping it; but we will not take the trouble to do so. I, therefore, maintain that we are largely responsible for the lives which are needlessly sacrificed. I beg to move the Resolution which I have already read.

COLONEL HILL (Bristol, S.): I rise with much pleasure to second the Motion which has been so ably and forcibly brought forward by my hon. Friend the Member for West Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo). After his very full exposition of the subject, I think I should be best consulting the convenience of the House if I make my remarks as brief as possible. It is not inappropriate that I should second the Motion, representing, as I do, the largest port in the West of England, which gives its name to the channel to which my hon. Friend has drawn attention, over whose busy waters passes and re-passes so large a proportion of the shipping of the United Kingdom.

No persons feel more keenly the want of a Harbour of Refuge than those who are interested in the shipping of the Bristol Channel. I do not propose to advocate the claims of any particular locality for the construction of a Harbour of Refuge. I prefer to take the more general terms of the Resolution, and to urge upon the House that it is desirable a provision should be made for Harbours of Refuge on all parts of the coast where they may be found desirable. Of course, it has to be shown that a need exists for this Harbour of Refuge, otherwise we cannot apply to any Chancellor of the Exchequer with any hope that he will provide the money. And here I venture to differ from my hon. Friend as to the reasons why this matter has been delayed. I do not think it has been from any want of consideration for the welfare or lives of our sailors, either from past or present Governments, or from any past or present Members of the House; but it has arisen solely from the circumstance that the construction of a Harbour of Refuge is a very costly matter, and it requires a large amount of pressure by public opinion upon the Government of the day to show them that this particular object is one which ought to have their first attention. It has been said that the question has been frequently under consideration, and the hon. Member for West Glamorganshire has referred to the Report of a Royal Commission which sat some 28 years ago, and fully investigated the whole matter. The Royal Commission, as the result of their investigation, unanimously reported that there was a need of Harbours of Refuge, and they recommended a certain expenditure of money upon their construction. Since that time, little, if anything, has been done towards carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission. What have been the losses that have occurred since then? It is computed that something like £52,000,000 worth of property has been lost, and that some 25,000 sailors have been drowned, leaving 18,000 widows and some 50,000 orphans, many of whom have had to be provided for by the ratepayers. During two heavy gales which occurred last autumn, there was a loss of some 2,000 lives around the coasts of this country, and the House has already been informed how severely those gales were felt in the Bristol Channel. I do not say that if Harbours of Refuge had been erected everywhere in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission all these lives would have been saved; but there can be no doubt that a large number of lives and a great deal of property might have been saved. One of the first duties of a civilized State is to do all in its power to protect the lives of its people; and, if that be so, then I say there can be no class which has greater claims upon the people of these islands than our sailors. We owe to them much, not only of the luxuries and of the necessities of life, but that naval and commercial maritime supremacy which is necessary to our very existence. I would venture to think that a sufficient case has been made out, and there is a general consensus of opinion that the time has come when something should be done in the direction of constructing Harbours of Refuge. I do not think that the provision by way of loans, which has been suggested by my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Board of Trade, will suffice to provide what is required, because a National Harbour of Refuge is a harbour which cannot be placed, as has already been pointed out, in any particular locality, in connection with any particular trade. It is quite true that there may be some places where the local trade of a district requires a harbour, and where an existing harbour, by enlargement and otherwise, may be made to serve the purpose of a Harbour of Refuge. In such a case the locality might be assisted by means of loans. But loans would not answer in the case of what I may call the great national harbours, simply because, in many instances, there would be no one to pay the dues, and no local authority to borrow. It is patent to everyone, I think, that the position of a Harbour of Refuge cannot be determined by economic considerations. Two considerations have to be brought in; one is the saving of life, and the other is the provision of harbours for Her Majesty's Navy in the event of war. That is a subject which I hope will be touched upon hereafter by some of the hon. and gallant Admirals who are Members of this House, and who understand the matter better than myself. But there is one fact we cannot help knowing, and that is, that our Fleet is dependent upon coal for its motive power, and our ships cannot now be kept for an indefinite time watching ports as vessels under canvas could in former years. Our vessels are constantly in want of coal, and we must have harbours in such positions that our ships may be able to defend the entrances to our channels. This is particularly the case with regard to the Bristol Channel, which is the centre of an important coal district and a great steam coal depôt, where a hostile fleet, sailing up the Channel, could destroy our coal ports and do an amount of damage that can hardly be calculated. I wish to say, therefore, that, in my opinion, these national harbours can only be made by means of money grants from the Consolidated Fund. That principle has already been acknowledged by the Government in the construction of harbours at Portland, Dover, and now at Peterhead; and what we press for is an extension of that principle, and that other ports should be constructed around the coast. During the 28 or 30 years which have elapsed since the Royal Commission made their Report, pointing out the need of Harbours of Refuge, our Mercantile Marine has quadrupled and the wealth of the country has largely increased. There ought, therefore, to be no difficulty in finding the requisite funds for this very necessary work. I am quite satisfied that the taxpayers of the country would willingly pay for the work, if the sums granted from the Consolidated Fund were judiciously expended, and it was shown to them that the money was required for the purpose of saving life and to preserve the commercial and naval supremacy of the country. I am quite sure that the working classes of this country—in my own constituency, at all events—take a deep and lively interest in the matter. They feel that the sailor ought to have his dangerous employment made as little hazardous as possible. With these observations I would venture to express a hope that the House will be pleased to accept the Resolution of my hon. Friend the Member for West Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, having regard to the recent fearful sacrifice of life in the Bristol Channel, and to the constantly recurring losses of life and property around the coasts of the United Kingdom, it is, in the opinion of this House, urgent that Her Majesty's Government should immediately take action to diminish these losses by the construction of suitable Harbours of Refuge."—(*Mr. Yeo.*)

Mr. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow) said, that he entirely agreed with the Motion, but was unable to agree with the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Gower Division of Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo) who moved it. The speech of the hon. Member dealt entirely with the construction of the larger description of Harbours of Refuge. These were, no doubt, very valuable; but if their efforts were to be confined to them and large sums expended upon them, it would very likely tend to the exclusion of a class of harbours which would be just as valuable. Nearly 40 years ago—when he entered the House—a Committee recommended very strongly the construction of Harbours of Refuge. In 1883-4 there was a Select Committee of that House appointed on the subject of Harbours of Refuge. That Committee was very ably presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks), who, he hoped, would state his views to the House upon this subject. Out of that very numerous Committee there were only half-a-dozen Members now in Parliament, and he trusted that they would make such statements as would impress the House with the desirability of carrying out the recommendations of the Select Committee. He was glad to find that the noble Lord the President of the Board of Trade (Lord Stanley of Preston) had already shown a very great interest in all subjects relating to the preservation of life and property at sea, and he hoped that this debate would lead him to give further attention in the direction of constructing Harbours of Refuge. It had been truly said that the Mercantile Marine had the protection of insurance; but it must be admitted that although those ships were protected by insurance their destruction led to a certain amount of loss to the nation. It was, however, impossible to prevent the loss of life by insurance, and this matter should be very seriously considered. He urged the hon. Member to go to a Division with his Motion in order to test the very strong opinion which prevailed upon the subject.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) said, that the Motion now before the House was different from the Motion under which the Committee of 1883-4 was appointed. That was a more general Motion, and had reference to harbours of accommodation all round the United Kingdom, and was not limited or confined to Harbours of Refuge. He was desirous of pointing out that a very valuable shipping trade passed round the North and North-West Coasts of Antrim, and that the county was destitute of any harbour for many miles round its coasts. Amid the many claims which were urged for consideration, he could not refrain from putting forward that of Antrim.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle) said, that few Members had taken part so frequently as himself in debates upon Harbours of Refuge, and it was quite refreshing to find this old subject taken up by a new Member, and treated with so much ability. The Motion before the House, however, was of a rather peculiar character, as it advanced a local claim first, and, in order that it might be swallowed, advocated Harbours of Refuge around the coasts of the United Kingdom. The question of Harbours of Refuge had been practically settled years ago. The Commission of 1859 recommended that various sums of money be spent on stated places for the purpose of constructing such harbours. But when the House came to consider the practical question of how the harbours were to be made, who they were to advantage, and how to be paid for, they passed the Act of 1861—which was discussed at so much length the other day. Government after Government had held to the doctrine that the money should be granted from Imperial funds to aid existing local harbours in order to meet local wants, and to be repaid by the localities which received the grants. The Public Works Loan Commissioners must deal with these matters on a very different scale if they desired to encourage local effort in that direction. If they would take 3¼ per cent—he believed that his right hon. Friend the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) had named 3 per cent instead of 4—it would go far in that direction. If Her Majesty's Government were now about to consent to make a Harbour of Refuge in the Bristol Channel, they must in all fairness refund to the people on the Tees and the Tyne, and many other rivers, the money which they had spent on such work themselves, so that all might start again on an equal footing. But it had been over and over again clearly demonstrated that Harbours of Refuge would have the effect of saving comparatively only a very few lives indeed. Years ago Mr. Milner Gibson pointed out that even if £1,000,000 had been spent on a harbour at Filey it would not have saved 15 lives in six years. Whilst that was the case, however, there might be a national duty with regard to harbours, not Harbours of Refuge, but national harbours, of a very different description from trade harbours, for the protection of English commerce in time of war—for sheltering our Navy and Merchant Services. The hon. Gentleman the Mover of the Resolution had answered his own question, for he said that if the ships in the Bristol Channel were charged one farthing per ton they could pay for the works themselves. £3,000,000 had been spent on the Tyne by the people there out of their own pockets, and on the Tees they had taxed their iron to the extent of 3*d.* a-ton for that purpose. Great sums had also been expended on the Tees, where there was now no bar, and where he lately saw a large steamer during a gale come in at low water and drop her anchor securely inside the breakwater. Surely the rich districts along the Bristol Channel could in the same way pay for their own works. If, however, national harbours were to be made, they could well be constructed on the North-East Coast, where an enormous amount of slag from the ironworks could be utilized by the Government. They had there proved by experience that breakwaters of slag, with concrete, could be made in the deep waters of the German Ocean, and they were turning to waste out now into the ocean from 30,000 to 40,000 tons of iron slag every week. It was placed there, in the first instance, at the expense of the ironmasters; but it might be brought into shape and moulded into breakwaters, in which the Government, consequently, could form a superstructure at very little cost indeed. As had been suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks), the extension of the fishing harbours would, in his (Sir Joseph Pease's) opinion, do far more to save life than the construction of Harbours of Refuge. He must repeat that if the Government were going to change their policy in this matter, they would have to refund the large sums of money which had been paid by the localities to which he had alluded.

Admiral MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) said, he thought that there were two matters which in that discussion ought to be kept distinct. There was, on the one hand, the question of large harbours for the Fleet, which must cost an enormous sum, and the localities for which should evidently be decided by the Admiralty; and, on the other hand, there was the question of life-saving harbours, with which the Board of Trade ought to have to do. After various Commissions and Committees had sat and made various recommendations, they had arrived at the point which the right hon. Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) had so well put the other night when he said that the Board of Trade should have more power in regard to the lending of money for harbour works. The right hon. Gentleman wished that the Board of Trade had undertaken the duty of discriminating somewhat more clearly what harbours should receive public assistance at all, because the principle acted upon up to the present time was that whenever aid was asked for, provided the necessary security was given, a loan was granted irrespective of how far the works were necessary or cheap; and he might have added that at present there was no guarantee that the money advanced by the Board of Trade would effect the objects for which it was obtained. With regard to the Bristol Channel it had been well said that it was perfectly well able to look after itself. As to Lundy Island, it was now an excellent Refuge, and as such could not be improved without an enormous outlay; and it should not be made a national harbour unless they were prepared to fortify it and to have a sufficient garrison there in time of war. During the Crimean War they had no ship of war and not a single sailor that could possibly have gone to Lundy Island to protect it. His opinion was that having Milford Haven—the best port in the Kingdom—on the North side of the Bristol Channel, if a harbour was wanted, as he thought it was, it should be made on the South side of the Bristol Channel at some point like St. Ives. It had been remarked that where there were most wrecks shown by the Wreck Chart, there were no harbours or loans for harbours asked for. There were many places, both in Ireland and England, where it was desirable to have harbours, but where it was impossible to give security for loans to construct them. For instance, in his own district there was the port of Fishguard, where he thought it most important to have a harbour, but where it was impossible to give any security. If he were to suggest a loan for Fishguard, the Public Works Loan Commissioners would look upon him as a sort of lunatic, because he could not offer adequate security. As he was discussing the general question, however, he should prefer going out of his own district, and would ask what security the people at the Butt of Lewis, where a Refuge was most required, could give? He should like to know how it would be possible to give security for loans for the construction of a harbour or harbours on the coast of Cornwall? The people had nothing on which they could give security to the Public Works Loan Commissioners, and, therefore, it was necessary that some assistance should be given to them. He maintained that Harbours of Refuge would certainly mitigate the loss of life at sea, and contended that the inferences to the contrary drawn from the Wreck Chart were not sound or well-founded. If Harbours of Refuge had not been constructed or loans had not been asked for their construction in places where they were wanted, the reason was not far to seek. It was simply because the people knew that it was useless to ask for loans when they had no security to give. That was the case in Pembrokeshire, and he should like to know whether it was not possible to extend some consideration to places which were in the position he had described? It was solely for the purpose of advocating their claims that he had joined in this debate.

Mr. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire) said, he did not think that the Resolution, if carried, was at all likely to advance the cause which the hon. Member for the Gower Division of Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo) had at heart—that of helping to improve the harbour accommodation of the United Kingdom. In the first place, his hon. Friend, at the outset of his speech, said he excluded commercial and fishery harbours. Now, he maintained that the harbours which were important to this country were the commercial and fishery harbours; and if they were excluded from the harbours of Great Britain what would you have left? He was afraid very few indeed. He was willing to admit that it was a matter of concern for the Military and Naval Departments of the State to have great fortified ports; but he did not believe that a few harbours capable of taking in a fleet, and of being a means of defence to the country, would at all meet the everyday wants of our ordinary seamen and fishermen around the coasts. It had also been pointed out that, after all, if they had put down a Harbour of Refuge at a particular place, it would not save a great deal of life. That was hardly a fair statement of the case. The case was this—that a big Harbour of Refuge, put down at a given place, would not save one iota more life than a much smaller one. What was wanted for saving life was, not a harbour into which a great fleet could run, but harbours at reasonably close intervals all the way round the coasts, with a certain amount of water at all states of the tide, into which a vessel could run when in distress in their immediate vicinity. It was to provide such harbours that he believed the whole efforts of those who were anxious to improve the harbour accommodation of this country should aim. The hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Pembroke and Haverfordwest (Admiral Mayne) had instanced the case of Fishguard to show the difficulty of harbours giving reasonable security for the loans. He did not quite agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman on that point, because what he (Mr. Marjoribanks) hoped the Government would do was very much to extend the powers of localities to give security. It seemed to him that if that course were followed it would be very beneficial. It was a course which prevailed in Ireland, where baronies might pledge their rates in security for such loans. At Wicklow, for instance, an excellent harbour had been constructed at a cost of £40,000, for which 11 adjacent baronies had given their rates as collateral security. He would apply that principle to this country also, and allow whole counties to come forward and pledge their rates for harbours at such places as might be really suitable for the purpose. If they took the case of some recent harbour works on the North-East Coast of Scotland, they would see how advantageous they had proved, and how vastly local trade and fisheries had increased in consequence of the improved harbour accommodation. He believed no better test could be given of the desirability of a harbour in any locality than the way in which the people of the locality would come forward and support it. He did not think counties would find a very serious burden imposed upon them by giving their rates in security for such works, for he believed they would produce an ample revenue to meet all liabilities incurred in their construction. What he would like to see was that some Government Department—the Board of Trade or some other Department—should see that all works executed by Government loans were properly executed, and in the places best calculated to yield the greatest amount of benefit from them to the localities. If that were done, then he thought they would find that the revenue which would accrue from such works would in all cases, or nearly all, be sufficient to pay the interest on the money by which the works were constructed, and that no burden would be thrown on the nation at all. But he was also of opinion that when necessary, and when good local effort was forthcoming, the Government might go further, and supplement local effort by a small grant. It was only two or three years ago that that House voted £250,000 out of Irish Church funds for such purposes in Ireland. Again, every year the Scottish Fishery Board had placed at its disposal only a small sum—£6,000—of which it applied some £4,500 to the improvement of harbours. He thought it might be advantageous, in certain cases carefully restricted, to help out individual cases where the works were really going to be of great use by supplementing local efforts with such grants, and he believed that in that way they would often prevent work being carried out that, when completed, was found insufficient for the purposes for which it was intended. He hoped, therefore, that his hon. Friend would not press his Resolution to a Division.

Sir HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District) said, that he had taken a great deal of interest in this question for a long period. The hon. Baronet (Sir Joseph Pease) had complained of his hon. Friend (Mr. Yeo) for arguing this question solely with reference to the wants of the Bristol Channel. But his hon. Friend had done nothing of the kind. He had dwelt on the necessity of constructing National Harbours of Refuge generally. The hon. Baronet to whom he had alluded and those who were his Colleagues from the North were fond of boasting of the grand harbours they had made, as it was said, out of their own breeches' pocket. But, surely, those harbours on the Tyne and Tees had not been made out of the breeches' pockets of the residents in those districts. They had been made out of shipping tolls and dues. Now, were the people of the North the only people who had constructed harbours in the same way? Take the case of Cardiff, in the much-abused Bristol Channel, which had, he believed, a larger harbour than Newcastle-on-Tyne. The Marquess of Bute might, perhaps, say that he had made it out of his own pocket, but if it had not been for the magnificent coalfields behind Cardiff, and the shipping which went into that port in consequence, the port could never have been constructed. It was a prosperous port, because it was one which a great number of ships frequented. They had the Port of Swansea, the income of which, in his time as a trustee, had increased from £6,000 to £100,000 a-year. They had done much the same as the people on the Tyne. Because they had done this, and now had a prosperous harbour, was no reason why great national harbours should not be made, if and when they were required. There was an undoubted want of Harbours of Refuge around our coast, for he maintained that harbours would save lives, in spite of all that had been said to the contrary. They had been told that the late Mr. Milner Gibson had said that if a Harbour of Refuge had been made at Filey it would not have saved more than 15 lives a-year. In that case he should say this proved that Filey was not a proper place for a harbour, although it had been recommended by the Government. The hon. Gentleman (Sir Joseph Pease) seemed to think that the ironmasters of the North were doing a great national service in throwing their iron slag into the sea to form harbours, but he (Sir Hussey Vivian) made a great deal of iron slag, and he certainly should not think of requiring any compensation for throwing it into the sea. The hon. Gentleman said that the people in the North had been recouped by the additional trade for the money they had spent on the Tyne, but he did not see how that bore on the question. Because the people on the North and on the North-East Coasts might not want Harbours of Refuge now it did not follow that they were not wanted in the Bristol Channel or at other points unconnected with any great commercial port, and from which no port would derive any commercial advantage. We wanted Harbours of Refuge to save the lives of our seamen and the property of those who brought commerce to our coasts. This was a broad, national question, and the Government ought to consider it in that light. He did not say where there should be a Harbour of Refuge, but there ought to be a dispassionate consideration by the Government where such harbours should be made around the coasts of the United Kingdom. They were told that the Public Works Loan Commissioners, of whom he was one, should be a little more liberal; but, then, it would be necessary to alter the Act under which the Public Works Loan Commissioners acted, and which bound them in a very stringent manner. The Commissioners could not advance money without proper security. They were bound to consider what the security offered to them was, and he had no hesitation in saying that, by observing the restrictions placed on them, they had saved the country from a great many bad debts. Those restrictions might, no doubt, be relaxed, but he did not think this would be prudent. It would be much safer and better to make direct grants where it was thought desirable that harbours should be constructed. It had been said the Motion before the House would not advance the cause the hon. Member had in view, because it did not deal with the general question of Harbours of Refuge. But he thought that it would be better to discuss one branch of the question at a time. They were all as anxious to have fishery harbours as well as national harbours. He had no doubt that his hon. Friend the Mover of the Resolution was as anxious for the former as the latter, but he (Sir Hussey Vivian) thought he had done well not to mix up the two branches of the question in the same Motion. He trusted that the Government would take the whole of this matter into their best consideration. He thought the time had gone by when we should allow the loss of life and property which had gone on for so many years in consequence of Government after Government failing to deal with the subject. He trusted that the Government would at last make up their minds to deal with the subject in a large and generous spirit.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said, that if the House wanted any evidence of the extreme difficulty of the subject they would find it in the speech of the hon. Baronet who had just spoken (Sir Hussey Vivian), and who exemplified in himself the great conflict of opinion which existed among those who claimed to speak as experts on that question. The hon. Baronet was somewhat inconsistent, inasmuch as, in his capacity of a Public Works Loan Commissioner, he had urged upon the House the extreme danger of relaxing the hold of the Commissioners upon the expenditure, and in the same breath he recommended the Government to adopt a vast scheme of Harbours of Refuge, without explaining how the expense of such a scheme was to be met. Of course, the question of expenditure was most important; but that question did not so much concern the Department which he had the honour to represent as it did the Treasury. It would, however, be his duty to point out some of the financial difficulties with which this great scheme was beset. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Barnard Castle Division of Durham (Sir Joseph Pease) had put the matter in a very clear and practical shape when he explained how from 1859 downwards this question had been repeatedly considered, and how, in the opinion of those best able to form a judgment, it was beset with great and overwhelming difficulties. The hon. Baronet also touched upon the practical question whether Harbours of Refuge would have the desired result of saving life. In 1861, when Mr. Milner Gibson was President of the Board of Trade, he entertained a very strong opinion upon that point, and certainly the action of successive Governments seemed to have confirmed his view. At that time it was suggested that about £360,000 a-year should be advanced for making various harbours, and the suggestion was considered by a subsequent Commission, but as far as he knew was never carried out. With regard to the speech of the hon. Member for the Gower Division of Glamorganshire (Mr. Yeo) who introduced the subject, the statistics quoted by him did not appear strictly accurate. That was not to be wondered at, if he drew them from the source to which the hon. Member alluded—namely, the society which he termed the National Refuge Harbours Society. That was a bogus society, and if the hon. Gentleman wanted any information as to the person who called himself the secretary he would obtain it by applying to the Charity Organization Society. It was a common mode of obtaining notoriety, or something better, to appeal to sympathy; but when so serious a matter as that under discusssion was brought forward in the House serious information was required.

MR. YEO said, he had not drawn his figures from the society in question.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS said, he was glad to hear that the hon. Member had not done so, and wished to say that, if that society had used his name as Secretary to the Board of Trade in connection with itself, such a use was wholly unauthorized, and he had directed his secretary to call upon them to withdraw it. The hon. Member had admitted the immense difficulty of the task which he had undertaken, and he had told the House that from 1831 down to the present time this question had been considered by successive Governments. The natural conclusion that must be drawn from that fact was that those successive Governments, while having every wish to provide for the safety of our sailors, had found this subject of Harbours of Refuge one of almost insuperable difficulty; first, with regard to the localities where they were to be constructed; and, secondly, with regard to the financial means by which these large works were to be carried out. The hon. Member had said that the late President of the Board of Trade had anticipated that it would require some £6,000,000 to construct these harbours; but it was to be feared that that sum would be totally inadequate to pay for the immense works that would have to be executed if this scheme were to be fully carried out, seeing that the 17 harbours that had been already constructed had cost about £23,000,000, the greater portion of which had been provided by private enterprize. The hon. Member had anticipated that some £300,000, being 20 per cent of the annual value of British ships now lost, which amounted to £1,500,000, would be saved to the country, and that, therefore, that amount would balance the interest of the capital of £6,000,000 proposed to be expended, and that if there was any deficiency it might be made up by a tax upon our shipowners. It seemed to him, however, that it would be rather hard to impose the whole taxation necessary for carrying out a national system of Harbours of Refuge upon one trade, which was certainly not in a prosperous condition just now. In the view of the Government, it was not desirable to impose additional burdens upon our commerce and upon our shipping interest at the present time. The hon. Member had suggested that the proposed harbours might be constructed by convict labour, but convict labour could not be obtained free of expense, while its employment interfered materially with other forms of labour. It must be remembered, in dealing with this important subject, that there were three classes of harbours—first, those which had been constructed at the national expense, which were chiefly used by Her Majesty's ships, and which were under the control of the War Office and the Admiralty; secondly, the small fishing harbours, for the construction and improvement of which loans were advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners; and, thirdly, the National Harbours of Refuge. The use of the latter could not be restricted absolutely to that of Harbours of Refuge, and they must necessarily partake of the character of commercial harbours. To construct such harbours would, therefore, be to promote commercial rivalry between different ports, and to promote one class of trade at the expense of the others. With regard to the number of lives which the proposed Harbours of Refuge would save, he held in his hand statistics which would show that these harbours would not operate very largely in the saving of life. He had had a Return prepared which he should be happy to lay on the Table of the House, and which threw a great deal of light on the question as to how far harbours affected the amount of loss of life at sea. This Return was a statement showing the number of sea casualties attended with loss of life during the five years ending June 30, 1885. It showed the whole of the life lost from British ships in that period, both exclusive and inclusive of collisions. Exclusive of collisions, 14,188 lives were lost, of which only 3,751 were lost on the coast of the United Kingdom, on or near; and deducting from this 1,158 lives lost in 210 vessels missing near the coast of the United Kingdom, there were, it would appear, 1,993 lives lost on or near the coast from stranding, foundering, and all other causes, except collisions, during five years. Examining the facts as they bore on that portion of the coast referred to in the hon. Member's Motion, it appeared that, taking a wide margin—namely, a line from St. David's Head to the Land's End, and half-way across St. George's Channel, including, as it did, part of the highway to Liverpool, without including collisions or missing vessels which might or might not have been in the district at the time of the loss, 289 lives were known to have been lost in that district in five years, or about 58 yearly. For the purposes of comparison he would take a contiguous district — namely, the quadrilateral bounded on the south by a line from St. David's Head to Carnsore Point, County Wexford, and on the north by a line from Fair Head, County Antrim, to the Mull of Cantire. This would include all the traffic from Holyhead to Dublin, all the traffic in and out of Liverpool, Fleetwood, Barrow, &c., and all the traffic in and out of Belfast, Stanraer, and the ports along the West Coast of Scotland, including the Clyde. Excluding lives lost by collisions and missing vessels in this vast area, with its capacious ports on both sides of the Channel, with their great facilities for refuge, 390 lives were lost in five years. This afforded some evidence that loss of life was not greatly diminished by the proximity of harbours. This was not a Party question, and the Board of Trade had, for some years past, directed its attention to finding out some remedy for the loss of life at sea. There was a great conflict of opinion as to where the Harbours of Refuge ought to be constructed, and there would also be immense difficulty in finding the necessary funds. Governments were trustees of the public purse, and he did not think that any Government would propose to spend a great many millions on what might, no doubt, be ultimately useful, but what was, in the first instance, an experimental expense. The Estimate of £6,000,000 was manifestly below the mark, for 17 harbours had cost £23,000,000.

Mr. YEO said, this amount included the cost of docks attached to the harbours.

Baron HENRY DE WORMS said, that, at any rate, the expense would be a very large one. One Gentleman suggested that the charge should be placed on the Consolidated Fund, and another that the charge should be covered by a system of insurance levied on the shipowner. The latter suggestion would not be fair to the shipowners, and was not likely to meet with acceptance in that House. Another suggestion, which was a very plausible one, was that facilities should be given to Local Authorities to raise money through the Public Works Loan Commissioners to facilitate the construction of small fishing harbours. That seemed to be the most practical suggestion that had been made. The proposal to raise the money by making Her Majesty's ships pay dues was futile, for it would only be making one Department pay money to another. He hoped that the hon. Member would be satisfied with the assurance that the Government, in regard to the construction of small harbours by means of loans obtained from the Public Works Loan Commissioners, wished to do all in their power to secure the safety of British merchant seamen, and to prevent loss of life at sea.

Mr. R. W. DUFF (Banffshire) said, he did not think the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) had left the question in an altogether satisfactory position. One Department was playing itself off against the other—the Treasury and the Board of Trade—and, in the meantime, the interests of the harbours went to the wall. He pointed out that successive Governments had not kept faith with them as to the terms and conditions on which loans were to be issued. The Treasury ought to revert to the original bargain, and give them money at 3¼ per cent. They ought to give up fighting amongst themselves, and unite in making a demand on the Treasury to give them money at a low rate of interest. That, he thought, would be better than squabbling amongst themselves as to which particular locality was to get a grant. His right hon. Friend (Mr. Marjoribanks) had rather over-stated the case in saying that Scotland got £6,000 a-year for harbours. They really got only £3,000 a-year from the Government. The rest came out of the fishermen's own pockets, being the surplus of the herring brand money. He should like to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade a question. He understood the Loan Commissioners were in direct communication with the Board of Trade; and he wanted to know, with regard to the Scottish harbours, whether the hon. Gentleman had taken steps to ascertain the opinion of the Fishery Board of Scotland, or to bring that body into working communication with the Board of Trade? If he did so, he had no doubt the Board of Trade would get very good advice. He hoped, before this debate was closed, they would hear from the Government on what terms they would give this money. If they would consent to give it at the rate originally promised, it would have the effect of stopping these demands that were constantly being made.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.) regretted that the statement of the Representative of the Board of Trade had not been more encouraging. The Secretary to the Board of Trade had spoken of certain fishery harbours as natural Harbours of Refuge; but, as a matter of fact, masters of ships would never think of making for those ports in bad or thick weather. On the West Coast, from Holyhead to the Land's End, there was no harbour for which a ship could run. At Lundy Island a National Harbour of Refuge might be established with great advantage to seamen. When satisfactory security could not be given by a locality to the Public Works Loan Commissioners, the money ought to be provided, in the first instance, by the Government, and a toll might then be imposed on the shipping making use of the new harbour. In the Bristol Channel 1*d*. per ton imposed on every cargo entering the Channel and leaving it for Ireland or foreign parts would produce £40,000 a-year. If the same toll were imposed on the coast trade, £10,000 more could be raised. That Harbours of Refuge were sadly needed on the West Coast was proved by the experience of the Bristol Channel pilots. About once in six months a pilot vessel was lost whilst beating about at sea, simply because there was no harbour near the mouth of the Bristol Channel into which she could run. The Motion before the House would have his support, because it raised a distinct question which he thought the public now fully realized—the saving of the lives of merchant seamen.

Mr. J. C. STEVENSON (South Shields) said, that he was sorry he could not give his vote for the Motion of the hon. Member for the Gower Division of Glamorgan (Mr. Yeo), though the idea of National Harbours of Refuge was one that was very tempting. He (Mr. J. C. Stevenson) had been interested in the question for a long time, and had followed the controversy for years before he had a seat in the House. In 1859 the Royal Commission was issued on account of the disastrous wrecks of sailing colliers on the North-East Coast. These colliers accumulated in fleets in the then unimproved coal-ports of the Tyne, Tees, and Wear, and being caught by sudden gales and having only bar harbours to run back to, the coast was strewed with wrecks. Parliament met the necessity, and saved the nation large sums of money by promising loans at a low rate of interest to improve these trading harbours. They had thus, out of their own resources, solved the problem themselves on the North-East Coast; and the Bristol Channel ports, which they had just been told possessed one-fifth of the trade of the country, could well afford to provide a Harbour of Refuge for themselves if it was really wanted. These vague ideas as to National Harbours of Refuge had often been heard before, but had never stood the test of a debate in that House. The Motion carefully avoided going into details, and laid down a general principle; but the principle could only be understood by going into details, and here the various Bristol Channel ports could not agree on a site for the Harbour of Refuge which they wanted, and therefore the Mover of the Resolution proposed that the Government should choose the site and pay for the harbour, which was to be national, in the sense that the nation was to pay for it. He should vote against the Motion; for it was the wrong way to deal with an important matter. The right way was to assist with loans at a low rate of interest the trading harbours; and he believed that if the fishery harbours were so improved as to admit fishing boats to enter at any time of tide, many more lives would be saved, and at a very much smaller cost than by the expenditure of large sums of money in so-called National Harbours of Refuge of doubtful utility, the only thing certain about which would be their enormous cost.

Mr. GILES (Southampton) said, he should be glad to vote for the Resolution, in order to affirm the principle that Harbours of Refuge were required in order to save the lives of our seamen and to protect our merchant shipping. But they were in the position of being between two stools, because it did not seem, after the remarks of the Secretary to the Board of Trade, that they were likely to get either large harbours or small harbours. The Government had, however, established precedents by constructing harbours at Plymouth, Portland, Dover, Holyhead, and Peterhead, and they had even gone as far as Colombo for the purpose, so that he thought they should go on applying the principle already acted upon. When they could afford to spend many millions a-year on our national defences, it seemed hard that we could not spare £200,000 or £300,000 a-year for Harbours of Refuge which were admitted to be necessary for the saving of life and property. In most parts of our coasts a fair Harbour of Refuge might be constructed for £1,000,000 or £1,500,000; but if we could not have large harbours, might we not have smaller harbours of refuge for the protection of our Fishing Fleets?

Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston) said, that whatever Government was in Office the country was bound to recognize the importance of the primary object of this Motion, being the saving of the lives of our sailors; but the question was how they could most cheaply and most quickly arrive at the object they had before them. Certainly, it was not to be expected that through the employment of convicts they could save either time or economy in this matter. He was almost as certain that the object could not be attained by waiting for the creation of great national harbours. He spoke on behalf of the County of Cornwall, which had 200 miles of coast. Now, nothing could better test the reality of the need of these harbours than to offer to Cornwall the facilities which were already agreed upon between the Board of Trade and the Treasury. He pressed upon the Government that they wanted an early settlement, and as large a circulation of those easy terms as was possible. Then he believed this question of Harbours of Refuge would solve itself in the most practical and the cheapest manner.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson) (Leeds, N.) said, he thought the hon. Gentleman who last spoke (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) had stated very clearly and very fairly what seemed to be the requirements in the present case. The hon. Member for Banff (Mr. Duff) had asked him whether he would state specifically the terms on which these loans were to be made to localities. Before doing so, he desired to point out that the hon. Member who brought forward this Motion (Mr. Yeo), in an admirable manner, with great clearness and fairness, seemed to be under the impression that funds might be raised for the repayment of these sums of money by taxing shipping. The hon. Member, perhaps, had overlooked the fact that a few years ago the light dues were reduced, and that, consequently, the fund out of which the monies were proposed to be repaid was fast galloping on to bankruptcy, and the idea of raising those dues would not be very popular. The fact appeared, also, to be rather overlooked that we had at present on our hands two Harbours of Refuge which answered to the description which the hon. Member appeared to have on his mind—namely, Peterhead Harbour and Dover Harbour. Peterhead Harbour was being constructed by means of convict labour. The original estimate of the cost of this harbour was about £250,000. Subsequently the estimate was enlarged to £500,000, and afterwards again it was enlarged to more than £750,000. Unless the information which came to him was very unreliable, he thought there were very few men of practical experience who attached any very great importance to the value of that harbour, even when it was constructed at the enormous cost. We also had Dover Harbour on our hands—a question which was still unsettled. A sort of resolution was arrived at that it was desirable to provide a Harbour of Refuge and Defence at Dover. It was to be built by means of convict labour, and about £50,000 or £60,000 had been already expended in providing quarters for convicts. No plan had been settled upon; no estimates had been made; and he did not believe that any hon. Member had the smallest idea what the ultimate cost of that harbour would be if it were carried out. He was assured by those who knew something of the question of the employment of convicts at Dover that not only would it not lead to any economy, but possibly there would be an increase of the cost of the works if it were carried out. Therefore, the difficulty of dealing with those large Harbours of Refuge was a very serious one, and it was one which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was bound to take very seriously into consideration before entering upon it. They had heard a great deal lately about the efforts that were being made to effect some economy in the Public Expenditure. Not only every Member of the Government, but every Member of the House, ought to support the Government in trying to keep down that Expenditure. The Government could not, at that time, look with favour on a proposal which would involve advances of large sums of money by the Treasury even for such valuable purposes as those in question. The Government desired to help, as far as possible, those who helped themselves—to aid local effort—and it would hardly be just to districts which had made those efforts and expended large sums of money that other districts—possibly competing with them—should have advantages given to them by large grants of public money. In the debate which took place a few days ago in that House, he admitted that he thought a strong case had been made out by the right hon. Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) and the hon. Member for Banff for the careful consideration—if not reconsideration—of the question of the period of repayment which was to follow the rate of 3¼ per cent. In the last debate he (Mr. Jackson) stated that the rates which were then in force were 3¼ per cent and a period of 30 years; 3½ per cent and a period of 40 years; and 3¾ per cent and a period of 50 years. At that time he promised, when the negotiations were completed and the Minute had assumed its final form, he would place it upon the Table of the House; and that would be done. When that was accomplished he thought the hon. Member's point would be attained. He could assure the House that the question had occupied the attention of the Government. He did not admit that there had been any breach of faith; but he was authorized to say that the Government considered the last proposal of the hon. Member for Banff a reasonable proposal, and when collateral security to the satisfaction of the Public Works Loan Commissioners was given, the Government would be prepared to extend the period of repayment at the 3¼ per cent rate to the full period of 50 years. He hoped the House would accept that as a satisfactory solution of a very difficult question which had long been pending. He had ordered a clause to be drawn up, which would be inserted in the annual Bill of the Public Works Loan Commission, to enable localities to give security and to extend the opportunities which they had of pledging their security to the Commission. He hoped the hon. Member would therefore see that the debate had not been without good effect, and that his Motion had accomplished his purpose, and that he would not press it further.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.) said, that while he thought the concession in regard to the 3¼ per cent was a matter of the very greatest importance, he at the same time doubted whether the rural districts in England would be able to provide the necessary collateral security. In Ireland, where that system had been tried, those districts had, with few exceptions, been unable to provide that security. Fishermen were helpless because they did not know how to combine, and how to get their case properly presented to the House; that was why their case broke down as had been stated. He was convinced the future of Ireland depended on the development of its fisheries; therefore he was profoundly interested in the question. He thought that sufficient weight had not been given to the recommendations of the Committee of the House which had reported on that subject. From his experience as a member of the Piers and Harbours Board in Ireland he had come to the conclusion that sufficient assistance was not given by the Exchequer to develop the maritime resources of the country. He complained that the Government had not redeemed their promise which they made when they came into Office that they would take into consideration the question of providing harbours in Ireland for fishery purposes. He thought Harbours of Refuge were of more importance than large ports. He complained that the whole of the Irish administration were absent from their places when a question of such importance to Ireland was being discussed.

Sir EDWARD REED (Cardiff) said, that he must take very strong exception to the statement that 17 Harbours of Refuge had cost £23,000,000 sterling. A very large portion of that amount was not devoted to refuge purposes at all; but to other purposes peculiar to great commercial harbours. This question should not be considered from the same point of view from which they were bound to consider it a few years ago. Harbours could now be constructed at very much less cost than a short time ago. The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms), who spoke on behalf of the Government, said that he could not conceive of a Harbour of Refuge being such that it could not be applied to commercial purposes. But Lundy Island was a case in point. With regard to Lundy Island, there was no idea in the mind of anyone of converting it into a port of any other kind than a port of refuge. There were other places round the coast which, like Lundy Island, could be made Harbours of Refuge at a comparatively small outlay. At Lundy Island, for a comparatively small outlay, they could produce a very large amount of refuge. He was not prepared to maintain as a general principle that they ought to expend very large sums for harbours peculiar to refuge purposes only. They ought rather to work in both directions —downwards from the great military and naval harbours which were required for naval purposes, such as that contemplated at Dover and other places, and upwards from the fishing and commercial harbours. He imagined that if that were done there would not be any great necessity for the creation of special Harbours of Refuge involving a large outlay. He was glad that the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) had been able to announce that the Government had agreed to accept with regard to loans what appeared to be the general view of the House. He (Sir Edward Reed) should vote for the Motion, not to embarrass the Government, but in order to avoid giving his sanction to what appeared to be the general drift of the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade—namely, that this great Imperial State, which boasted of its world-wide commerce, had no course open to it save that of sitting down with their hands by their side and saying people must drown around our coasts, because we could not afford to give funds for Harbours of Refuge.

Question put.

The House *divided:*—Ayes 81; Noes 86: Majority 5.—(Div. List, No. 93.)

POST OFFICE—SUNDAY DELIVERY OF LETTERS.—RESOLUTION.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness), in rising to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that, on and after Sunday the 26th of June next, the Sunday Delivery of Letters, &c. by letter-carriers and rural messengers should cease throughout the United Kingdom, except in those districts where, after the date named, the receivers of two-thirds of the correspondence of the district petition the Postmaster General for a Sunday Delivery,"

said, he would formally make the Motion, as he understood that the Postmaster General would offer no opposition to the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the matter. Under the circumstances, he would gladly accept the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Honiton (Sir John Kennaway) proposing a Select Committee to inquire into Sunday labour in the Department outside the Metropolis. Under the present circumstances they had three conditions of things. In London there was no Sunday delivery, and there nine-tenths of the officials were free, and had complete rest, from Saturday night until Monday morning. In large towns like Glasgow, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Belfast, letters could be had by calling for them within certain hours in the morning; and in smaller towns they had a delivery of letters to all persons who did not apply to be exempted. The hon. Gentleman quoted figures showing that several thousands of persons in Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, and other places availed themselves of this provision, and had applied to be spared the infliction of letters on Sunday. If London, with its 5,000,000 of inhabitants, and the centre of the whole business of the earth, did not suffer by the Sunday rest, he did not think other places could suffer. Moreover, he did not see what inconvenience could arise with their system of cheap telegrams. It would not be found that the wages of those who delivered on Sundays were higher than those who did not, and it would be impossible to reduce wages lower than they were. At present it would be difficult to determine the two-third receivers; and, therefore, one modification of his Resolution was to make the question depend on two-thirds of the ratepayers, and another was to carry out the London system compulsorily. But he was afraid that in England public opinion was not sufficiently advanced for that. A Resolution to that effect was once carried in that House, but it was shortly afterwards changed. The State, as a great employer of labour, ought to set a good example, and put an end to Sunday labour as far as possible. He doubted whether throughout the country we should anywhere find two-thirds in favour of Sunday delivery. It was purely on physical grounds that he brought forward the Resolution. As a medical man, he had had experience of the terrible exhaustion caused by Sunday labour. Postmen, who were such a hard-worked class, ought to have the great boon of Sabbath rest. There was a great amount of unnecessary labour in the Post Office. A large number of merchants, knowing that there was a Sunday delivery in the country, were in the habit of posting circulars on Saturday with a view of the Sunday delivery. The hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Resolution which stood in his name.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.), in seconding the Resolution, said, he felt bound to urge that, on social as well as physical grounds, every man was the better for having a portion of time to himself, and that a larger amount of labour could be done by those who worked six days than by those who worked seven days a-week.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that, on and after Sunday the 26th of June next, the Sunday Delivery of Letters, &c. by letter-carriers and rural messengers should cease throughout the United Kingdom, except in those districts where, after the date named, the receivers of two-thirds of the correspondence of the district petition the Postmaster General for a Sunday Delivery."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

Sir JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton), in rising to move as an Amendment—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the whole question of Sunday labour in connection with the Post Office, outside the Metropolitan district,"

said, that the matter was important from two points of view—first, because it was connected with the national recognition of the Day of Rest; and, secondly, because it intimately affected the happiness of a great number of public servants. He attached great importance to the first point; because the national recognition of a Day of Rest brought a great blessing. London compared favourably with great Continental cities in its criminal statistics; and the working classes were extremely jealous of anything which would undermine that Day of Rest which they so greatly enjoyed. He felt great sympathy with the Motion; and he thought we had to justify to ourselves the fact that, while all the other Government offices were closed on the Sunday, the Post Office should be an exception, more especially when we saw that, in London, the Sunday post could be done without. But we must recognize that the Post Office service was different from all other public services. The Government had a monopoly; and, looking to the fact that many parts of the country were entirely dependent on the Post Office for means of information and communication, it was necessary that we should go cautiously in anything we did. In looking at the matter, we ought to take into consideration how much had been done, especially by Sir Rowland Hill, as the Post Office had taken as the basis of its action a Minute passed in 1849, that to all connected with it, the greatest amount of rest should be afforded consistently with due regard to the convenience of the community. By a Resolution of that House passed in 1871, on the Motion of the late Sir Charles Reed, with the assent of the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, it was agreed that as much relief as possible should be given to letter carriers on Sundays. The proposal of the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) followed that policy in that it would enable the whole country to have the same freedom from postal delivery which was now tolerated, not to say enjoyed, in London. It was, however, a dangerous thing to ask a great public Department to regulate its business according to lines which might recommend themselves for the moment to the House of Commons; but an inquiry by a Select Committee of that House was a very different thing, and might well be assented to by Her Majesty's Government. It would then be ascertained how far an extension of the system of relief from Sunday delivery might be extended, and how far public opinion would encourage the Department to proceed in that direction. For instance, it had been stated that the system of window delivery in Scotland on Sunday had led to more work and to greater inconvenience than the delivery by carriers. The case of the drivers of mail carts ought also to be taken into consideration. He trusted that the error which was committed in 1850, when a change was made of such an abrupt nature that they had shortly to revert to the old system, would not be repeated. He begged to move the Amendment of which he had given Notice.

Mr. GEDGE (Stockport), who had an Amendment on the Paper to the effect—

"That it is desirable that all Post Offices throughout the country be closed on Sunday to the same extent as they are closed on that day in the Metropolis,"

said, he preferred his own Amendment to the original Motion because it covered the whole ground, but he would second the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for East Devon, as it brought the whole question of Sunday labour in the Post Office before a Select Committee, and he understood that the Government would consent to this. In dealing with this question it must not be forgotten that the labours of Post Office letter carriers had been largely increased during the last few years, and that the present system of cheap telegrams would obviate any inconvenience that might arise from the non-delivery of letters upon Sundays. He hoped that in the end such an arrangement would be come to as would enable people in the country to have the same enjoyment that people in London possessed of being without letters on Sunday.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the whole question of Sunday labour, in connection with the Post Office, outside the Metropolitan district."—(*Sir John Kennaway.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg) said, he rather regretted that any proposal should be suggested that might appear to diminish the strength of the original Resolution. He represented a large agricultural constituency, consisting almost entirely of small towns and villages, and he had received a practically unanimous request that Sunday deliveries should be discontinued. He believed this would be considered as a perfect and entire blessing. However, while preferring the more definite proposal of the hon. Member for Caithness to that contained in the Amendment, he felt bound to give his assent to the latter if it was agreed to by the Government.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University) said, he had listened with great satisfaction to what had been said upon this question, especially as this was a matter as to which opinions had been held rather warmly, and had been expressed rather strongly outside that House. It was, therefore, all the more agreeable to him to find hon. Members expressing their views upon the Question inside that House with so much moderation. The Motion of the hon. Member for Caithness was of a very moderate nature, and his proposal ran in the groove of the principle which had been laid down by the Post Office with the view of reducing as far as possible the Sunday labour of the letter carriers in the country. By the proposal of the hon. Gentleman unless the recipients of two-thirds of Sunday letters in any particular district petitioned for a Sunday delivery that delivery would not take place. He, however, trusted that the hon. Member and the House would proceed carefully and warily in this matter; and, for his own part, he preferred the proposal contained in the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Devon, to refer the whole subject to a Select Committee of that House, to that contained in the original Motion, which, if adopted, would probably have the effect of substituting throughout the length and breadth of the land a window delivery of letters on Sunday instead of delivery by letter carrier, irrespective of the requirements of any particular district. He held in his hands statistics which had been prepared at the instance of the late Mr. Fawcett showing the manner in which people utilized the system of window delivery in the large towns in Scotland, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in Belfast. In Edinburgh and Glasgow the window post was but little used. In Aberdeen, however, on one Sunday 983 persons called for letters, 364 of whom had their walk for nothing, and the remaining 619 received 2,427 letters; 26 officials were employed on this task, just the number that it would have taken to make a letter delivery. Upon another Sunday, the statistics for the 10 large towns in Scotland were 3,175 persons who called for letters, 960 went empty away; the number of officials engaged in serving these persons was 283, and it would have taken 530 to perform a regular delivery. So that though the amount of Sunday official work was thus diminished, it was at the expense of considerable Sunday work on the part of the public. It certainly would, in view of these figures, appear to be a doubtful advantage to institute the system of window delivery throughout the whole kingdom, and the choice appeared to be between the present system of Sunday delivery and the suspension of all Sunday delivery. This is a very grave question, and one that could not be settled off-hand in a debate in that House. Therefore, he thought the Amendment of the hon. Member for East Devon was calculated to relieve the House of a great difficulty. On the main point, he completely agreed with the hon. Member's sentiments regarding this question. The desire of the Post Office was to minimize, as far as possible, the labour of its servants provided it could be done without undue inconvenience to the public. When, in 1850, the late Lord Shaftesbury carried his famous Resolution in a small House, the result was that after a few weeks the old system of Sunday delivery had to be revived. For the dignity of this House and the efficiency of the department, and especially out of consideration for the officers of the Post Office, it was highly undesirable that such a thing should occur again. It would be very hard on the officers if in one week Parliament adopted a Resolution leading them to suppose that Sunday work would be discontinued, and a few weeks afterwards reimposed that burden. It was far better to proceed carefully and after due inquiry. A great number of Petitions had been presented to this House in favour of the abolition of Sunday delivery; but one could not gauge the strength of a popular movement by the number of Petitions presented. Some did not exactly know what they were signing, and he had received a Petition from the Town Commissioners of Belturbet against the Motion, in which it was stated that several Commissioners who had signed the Petition in favour of the Motion had done so by mistake. It was 15 years since an inquiry was held into this subject, and the time, he thought, had come when a further inquiry might advantageously be made. He had endeavoured to deal with this subject without touching on the religious and social aspects of the matter, though he could assure hon. Gentlemen that he was not at all indifferent to these points, and he was most anxious that the inquiry should be as careful, thorough, and complete as it was possible to make it, so that the Post Office might be able to base upon it such a satisfactory adjustment as would be both for the public convenience and for the benefit of the officials concerned.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) said, he would do away with all Sunday labour wherever it was possible, and compel those who imposed Sunday labour upon others to pay heavily for it. That had been found by the trade unions most efficacious in cutting down Sunday labour. He hoped that the Telegraph Department would be included within the scope of the inquiry.

Mr. RAIKES said, he understood the words "Post Office" in the Amendment to include the Telegraph Department.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked whether there would be any reduction in the wages of the *employés* if the amount of their work should be reduced.

Mr. RAIKES, in reply, said, that that was a question with reference to which it would be desirable to await the advice of the Committee. But he would point out that if no reduction should be made in the wages of those whose labour was reduced, it would follow as a logical consequence that additional payment must be made to those who should continue to work on Sundays.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) said, he was in full sympathy with the proposal, and hoped that the Committee would set to work with an earnest desire to arrive at a conclusion that would tend to the advantage of those whose case they were to consider. A severe strain was put on a body of hard-working men by the present system, therefore he sincerely trusted the Committee would be able to recommend measures of relief.

Mr. M'ARTHUR (Leicester) said, he did not support the Motion at all from a religious or Sabbatarian point of view, but upon the ground that men could not retain either their physical or mental health without a weekly day of rest, which many of the postmen never had. He thought that the Committee ought not to put the religious aspect of the matter altogether out of view. It was a serious thing that some 30,000 men in one of the public Departments of the country should be kept at work Sunday after Sunday, and so prevented from attending a place of worship. The difficulty might be met by such of the public who desired their letters on Sunday being allowed to have them upon sending for them.

Mr. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University) said, he would suggest that the Committee should be instructed to report how the Sunday labour of the servants of the Post Office might best be reduced. If the Amendment were carried in its present form it might not have an operative result. If it should be resolved to lighten the labours of postmasters and letter carriers on Sunday by relieving them of part of their duties it would be necessary to appoint substitutes and pay for their services. And it was right that the House should bear in mind that it was not merely letter carriers who had a claim to consideration—postmasters were very much tied to their posts, and if they were to be relieved — as they ought to be — on Sundays, some other persons must be employed to take their places. He suggested that the Secretary to the Treasury might well consent to unloose the purse-strings a little. When the Post Office was first established it was not thought that it would ever be a contributor to the public revenue. Contrary to expectation, however, it had become a large contributor; and, consequently, the Treasury need not grudge a small expenditure for the purpose of effecting a beneficent change in the interests of the servants in the Post Office. He hoped that if the House agreed to the Amendment, it would be on the distinct understanding that the Select Committee should be a reporting and not a mere shelving Committee.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, he thought there was a great deal of nonsense talked about Sabbatarianism in this country. At the time that they were making these efforts to reduce the Sunday labour of postmen, efforts were being made to permit boating on the lakes in the parks on Sunday. They should bear in mind that Sunday was the only day when many working men were able to attend to their correspondence, and care must be taken that the Post Office was not entirely closed to them on that day. He could assure the Government that if they seriously intended to interfere with the convenience of the public in Ireland in regard to the postal service on Sundays there would be a bigger fight than had been made to-night on the Motion now under consideration.

Question put, and *negatived.*

Words *added.*

Main Question, as amended, put.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the whole question of Sunday labour, in connection with the Post Office, outside the Metropolitan district.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright), who had given Notice to move—

> "That, in the present depressed state of the Agricultural interest, it is expedient to secure further Government support in aid of higher Agricultural Education by carrying out successive experiments in different parts of the Country in cereals, grasses, dairying, contagious diseases of animals, and the production of meat, in order to ascertain on what points the British Agriculturist can most successfully compete with the Foreign producer,"

said, if they left London and went North, South, East, or West, they would find the same story—landlords not getting their rents, and having to shut up their houses and lease them in order to economize; tenants, if not bankrupt, on the verge of bankruptcy, quite unable to meet the demands made upon them, and living, as it were, from hand to mouth; agricultural labourers, who, no longer able to get an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, were leaving their country homes and flocking into the large towns; and tradesmen and shopkeepers, especially the small shopkeepers, were in worse straits than they had ever previously been in. All that pointed to the fact that there was very serious depression, and that, if possible, some remedy ought to be found for it. Although he did not profess to give a conclusive remedy, yet he thought he should be able to suggest, before he sat down, several points which, he hoped, the Government would consider and act upon. It had become practically impossible to cultivate cereals at a remunerative price; and they found, from the Returns presented to the House, that the average price of wheat for the last year was 31*s.* a-quarter, the average price of barley was 26*s.* 7*d.*, and the average price of oats 19*s.* Under such circumstances, it was absolutely impossible, rent or no rent, to cultivate cereals; and, unless a remedy were provided, the cultivation of cereals must go out altogether. That alone was a matter calling for very grave consideration. The land, in many places, had been stimulated by artificial manures, and was now suffering from the results of that enervating process. The cultivation of grasses was now attracting more attention than it had formerly done; but education was slow, because the experiments were few. What was wanted, and what he would like to see, were experiments conducted on a larger scale, with perhaps more scientific knowledge, in order that the country might see how to bring good for the future of agriculture out of the present evil. In the matter of dairying, we got our best instruction from America and Denmark, and anyone desiring to learn the best manner of following out that business must go to those countries. There was something wrong in that. Up to the present time, owing to the enterprise and vigilance of the British tenant farmer, we had been able to cope with our foreign competitors; but, now that those countries had the assistance of technical schools, there was danger of their outstripping us in the race, and the present seemed a fitting opportunity to lay down some definite basis on which they could give great assistance to those who were being instructed and those who were anxious to impart instruction to others. In that business the breed of cattle had to be very carefully considered.

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 20th April, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*Ordered — First Reading*—Deeds of Arrangement Registration * [231]; Public Health Acts Amendment (Buildings in Streets) * [232]; Prison (Officers' Superannuation) (Scotland) * [233].

Second Reading—Police Force Enfranchisement [17]; Land Tenure (Scotland) [19], *debate adjourned.*

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee—Butter Substitutes * [48]; Oleomargarine (Fraudulent Sale) * [175], *referred to the Select Committee on* Butter Substitutes.

Committee—Truck * [109]—R.P.

Committee—Report—Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment * [155].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MERSEY RAILWAY BILL.

CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, considered.

New Clause (Power to pay interest out of Capital) *brought up,* and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."—(*Mr. Dodds.*)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): This Bill came before me as Chairman of Committees as an unopposed Private Bill, containing a clause not now inserted; but proposed to be introduced authorizing the payment of interest out of capital. As the House will remember, that subject is one which has been carefully considered in a full House on several occasions. Eventually a Standing Order was adopted which prohibited the insertion of such a clause unless the Committee, in view of special circumstances, thought it convenient that it should be inserted, and then it was to be inserted subject to certain conditions. Well, I confess I think that is a rather unfortunate position in which the question should be placed, because it lays down the general principle that payment of interest out of capital is not to be permitted; but allows the Committee to put aside that principle, if the special circumstances in the opinion of the Committee warrant its being set aside. The effect of that, I imagine, is this—that whenever the clause is inserted it raises a certain presumption—a slight presumption it may be, but, still, a certain presumption—that the case is one in which not only the Committee think the clause might be inserted, but that there is a real argument of a solid character in favour of its insertion. It seems to give the influence of the Committee in favour of the scheme, and might possibly be understood to recommend it to investors. Now, I think it extremely undesirable that a Committee of this House should discriminate in that way as to whether this clause should be inserted or not, the inference being, when the clause is inserted, that there is a sort of credential given to the proposal, and, indeed, that there is almost an invitation on the part of the Committee to the public to subscribe. So much as to the general principle which I only mention now because I think that sometime hereafter it may be expedient that the Standing Order should be reconsidered with a view to make it either one thing or the other. But with respect to this particular case it came before me, as I said, as an unopposed Bill with this provision inserted. The case appeared to me to go further than we had hitherto considered it right to sanction, at all events in dealing with unopposed Bills. The cases we have hitherto considered and sanctioned have been generally of a very simple character—small subsidiary lines which have been promoted by landowners in the district, and where the landowners have generally taken payment for the land they have been selling in shares of the Company; where there is no suspicion that contractors are promoting the line, and where it is simply a small local matter, supported exclusively in the locality. Under such circumstances, the Committee on Unopposed Bills have several times sanctioned the insertion of this clause. But this Bill is in a different position. The Bill relates to a very large undertaking—for making a railway under the bed of the Mersey, connecting Liverpool and Birkenhead. That railway has been made. It is working, and carries considerable traffic. But the connections—especially on the Cheshire side—are not made, connecting that railway to the Cheshire lines and other lines on that side. Under this Bill the promoters desire to obtain power to make this connection, and it is suggested—probably in perfect accuracy and good faith—that if these connections are made there will be, not only a large accession of passenger traffic, but a considerable accession of goods traffic, so that the extension will be very profitable to the line, and ultimately redound to the benefit of the original shareholders. But the original shares are now at a considerable discount, and it is represented that it will be impossible for the shareholders to provide the additional capital if they were to do so in the form of ordinary shares; and if they were to be put forward as preference shares the proposal would embarrass the ultimate financial organization of the Company, and would tend to depreciate the ordinary shares. It is, therefore, proposed that this extension of the undertaking should be recognized as a new undertaking, that the capital should be raised separately, and that power should be given to pay interest on the capital so raised during construction. I thought this was a case which very much extended the principle embodied in these cases which have been sanctioned hitherto. I thought, therefore, that we had not sufficient authority as a Committee on Unopposed Bills to sanction the clause. We accordingly rejected it, leaving it to the House to determine when the case came before it—as we understood it would be brought forward—whether the clause should or should not be re-inserted. I have now, therefore, to leave it to the House to decide whether or not the insertion of the clause should be authorized, and to give a leading to the Committee in future cases of the same kind. There, perhaps, I might stop; but I am unwilling to sit down without adding—I now speak as a private Member and not in any official capacity—that I should myself be in favour of the insertion of this clause in the Bill. I belong to what has come to be considered, I am afraid—at all events at present—an old-fashioned school of economists who are in favour of the greatest liberty to people to make good or bad investments according to their own wisdom or unwisdom, provided that the nature of the arrangement is perfectly open. We go, in short, upon the principle—*Caveat emptor*. If it is provided that the conditions of the investment should be made known, I should myself be, in principle, in favour of allowing that freedom to investors. I think I may say that our recent experience has done away with some of the apprehensions that have been raised as to the possibility of unwary investors being entrapped into bad investments in consequence of the offer of this payment of interest out of capital. We have had one or two great undertakings, of late, in which the principle has been sanctioned, and the proposal to invest with the advantage of raising interest during construction has afterwards been put before the public; but the public have not accepted the proposal. The public may have been wise or unwise in so declining to accept of these proposals; but the conclusion, at all events, is clear that the mere inducement of paying interest out of capital is not in itself sufficient to induce investors to disregard other conditions of the investment, and go into an undertaking they thought might be financially unsound. The greatest example familiar in recent times—the Manchester Ship Canal—may or may not be an undertaking which promises great ultimate profit. I pronounce no opinion upon that, nor do I say how far the persons who have declined to subscribe may have been wise or unwise. But the conclusion is clear, from that illustration, that the public are not led by this offer of payment out of capital to subscribe where, under other conditions, they would not have subscribed. That experience rather warrants us in allowing greater freedom than we have hitherto done. In these last observations I am speaking entirely in my private capacity and not in any official character. But I seek the guidance of the House upon this question so that we may understand what we shall do on future occasions; therefore, I submit the whole question as to what shall be done in this case to the decision of the House.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Without expressing a decided official opinion upon the general question, I may say that, considering the large amount of money spent upon this undertaking, and the fact that it has been raised by a a perfectly *bonâ fide* public subscription, it seems to me rather hard to deprive the Company of advantages such as may be conferred upon them by the Standing Order which allows, under certain circumstances, that interest may be paid out of capital during the construction of works. Now, these proposals are strictly in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Standing Orders; and considering the very great benefit which would accrue, I think, from the scheme, it does seem to me and the Board of Trade that we might very fairly accept the views expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin, and accede to the proposal now before the House.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause *added.*

Amendments made.

Bill to be read the third time.

Mr. Courtney

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

POLICE FORCE ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL. [BILL 17]

(*Mr. Burdett-Coutts, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Howard Vincent, Lord Claud Hamilton, Colonel Laurie.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster) said, in rising to move the second reading of a Bill for the complete enfranchisement of the Police in Great Britain—the Bill did not extend to Ireland—he could promise the House he would not trespass upon its attention for a very long time. For he hoped to be followed by others possessing a prior interest in this subject, so far at least as the House was concerned, and particularly he might mention his right hon. Friend the Member for the Epping Division of Essex, who for years had taken a legislative interest in the Police Force, and upon whom the privilege of moving the Bill would have rightly devolved had not the chances of the ballot placed it in his hands. Moreover, the Bill was identical with others which had been introduced into the House, in favour of which arguments had been adduced and repeated, which had twice, at least, prevailed to secure the practical acceptance of the proposals, although, on account of the pressure of other Business, they had never been placed on the Statute Book. It might seem foolhardy in the present and threatening state of Business in the House to hope that they should be more successful in getting the Bill through that Session, were it not a a Bill to which all parties were practically agreed. And he ventured to think that some special effort might be made, because it was a Bill involving an act of tardy justice—of individual justice—to a body of our fellow citizens, to whose conduct and character we certainly owed any acknowledgments that we could pay; men who had long and patiently endured the deprivation of the first Constitutional right of Englishmen, a deprivation which could not he would attempt to show, bear for one moment the criticism of justice or expediency. The fewest words possible were necessary to demonstrate the fitness of the police for the Parliamentary franchise. They were not only a body of men highly trained to their duties, but those very duties were such as to train their mind to a temperate, a careful, and almost a judicial method. He said this of them at least, in comparison with any other portion of the electorate in the same station of life. By those duties also they were endowed with a knowledge of many subjects which came within the range of politics, particularly with the large class of legislative proposals affecting the daily life of cities. Who, just to give an instance which came to his mind, would be better qualified to pass judgment upon Bills relating to the protection of life and property, or the regulation of places of amusement, or places in which large crowds assemble, than those men whose daily and nightly business it was to look after these things? And with regard to general politics, surely they were as well fitted as soldiers and sailors, and revenue officers and postmen, to all of whom they gave the franchise, while they denied it to the police. In all our Colonies he believed the police possessed the franchise. Again, he presumed, no one would deny that the English police were as well fitted for the franchise as the Scotch police, who in all cities and royal boroughs had exercised it for many years, and had done so, he would remind the House, to the complete satisfaction of the Chief Constables of Scotland. To point the anomalous state of things now existing, he might say that, side by side with these police now possessing the vote, the police of 32 counties, and of a certain number of boroughs in Scotland, did not possess it, an anomaly which that Bill was intended to remove. It might be illustrated still further by pointing out that when those Scotch police, now endowed with the vote, were, as very often happened, drafted into England, they at once lost it. In view of that state of things, and of such numbers of different grades of civil servants possessing the franchise, could they be surprised that the police themselves—he appealed to a deputation to his hon. Friend the Member for Central Sheffield, representing 10,000 of them—felt seriously slighted at the deprivation, and could not understand why they, in particular, of all classes of Her Majesty's servants, should be singled out for that ignominious mark of incapacity? The case seemed almost strong enough for him to leave it here; but to render it complete he would like to answer the only objections which he could find to have been taken against these proposals. It was said that it would not be well to turn policemen into politicians. A line in a Statute Book could not transform a man into a politician. Political sentiments and sympathies were neither created nor obliterated by giving to or withholding from a man the right to record his vote. Rather where they the result of the increased spread of intelligence, the rapidity of communication, the general development of interest in public affairs, and the general demand of all classes of the community to participate in the government of the country. If a man was prevented from having political sympathies by withholding from him the franchise, that was tantamount to saying that each successive class which, in the extensions of the franchise, had obtained the vote, did not obtain it in satisfaction of pre-existing political aspirations. Few reformers would be found to agree with such a theory. By giving them the franchise you did endow these aspirations with a higher and keener sense of responsibility, and that, to every class and to every body of men, was a good and not a bad thing But if you withheld political rights from any class really qualified to exercise them, you did not prevent them from being politicians—you left them politicians with a grievance, a most undesirable element in the community, particularly where it was unnecessary. The police were men, who, in common with their fellows, took an intelligent and watchful interest in affairs, and who, it must be within the general knowledge of candidates of all Parties, already had their political views and sympathies. You would neither create nor destroy these by giving them the franchise, and therefore he claimed that this objection in the main fell to the ground. He need hardly point out that these disabilities were imposed upon the police as early as the reign of George IV., long before the Ballot Act had been passed or even thought of, and of course the ballot made all the difference to the significance of this objection about turning them into politicians. But there was a practical point in it which had been raised with regard to policemen endowed with the franchise appearing at political meetings either as participators or in the exercise of their duty to keep the peace. As to the first, he did not think it necessary that any regulations now existing should be relaxed. He could not see the harm in a policeman, when off duty, and in plain clothes like any other civilian, attending a political meeting. But, on the other hand, he did not think they would suffer very much if they were forbidden to attend. He did not think they would suffer in the soundness, correctness, and impartiality of their political views if they were deprived of the opportunities of coming directly under the blandishments of a Parliamentary candidate. Not one third of the voters in a constituency ever went near a political meeting. Therefore, in this respect, the police would be no worse off than the majority of the voters. In any case, it was a matter that might be safely left to the authorities. But with reference to their appearing at these meetings in the exercise of their duty, he would remind hon. Members that, in London at least, it was only in the last resort, in cases of actual serious assault, that the police were called in to political meetings at all; that when there they were the most prominent persons, their conduct could be seen and taken note of by every one present, and even if self-restraint and fairness were not of the essence of their training, the danger of their displaying the contrary, and the certainty that they would be brought to book for it, would prevent them from showing partiality. But the best answer to all such trivial suspicions was the fact that three successive Home Secretaries, the Ministers whose first duty it was to preserve the efficiency of the police, had emphatically approved the principle of this Bill. In conclusion, he would venture to address himself for a moment to a more general argument and one of more far-reaching importance. The Police Force of this country is essentially a civil force. Except so far as concerned their discipline when under orders, they did not partake in any way of the military character which attached to the police of many foreign countries. It was not only a source of pride to our people, but a cause of general content and of pacification — if he might say so—to the more turbulent elements of the population, that order did not have to be maintained as in other countries by a plentiful display of military uniforms and by the domineering officialism of a military caste, but by the restraining influence of a body of men who were far removed from such a discipline and from the spirit and temperament which it would involve. They were drawn from the people; they were of the people; and to the people in the hours when they put off their uniforms they returned. He had seen them himself, for many of them lived in the model lodging houses which were scattered over this City, living in their quiet homes, which were generally examples of neatness and order, at peace and in sympathy with their neighbours, to whom they often had to trust to give an eye to the sick wife or little children during their long eight hours of exposed and dangerous duty, leading the lives of intelligent, companionable citizens, with no prejudice of caste, with no affectation of superiority or power. On a hundred occasions in the exercise of their duty the consciousness of these civil characteristics had its weight among those whom they had to control, and people—he was not speaking of the downright criminal classes, but of those persons who from one cause or another were inclined to turbulence and disorder, and who formed the actual majority of the cases with which the police had to deal—people of this sort, who would wildly rebel against anything like military interference, were made amenable to the influence of social order, and were easily controlled by men who had no organized class feeling out of harmony with the general body of citizens. It was impossible to exaggerate the value of this characteristic of the police. If it did not exist, if it were not recognized, every petty squabble in the streets would bring the victims of momentary passion into the Police Courts, and every mob would become a riot. The police, therefore, were—and he trusted always would be—in this country a civil force. By what right then—by what reason of justice or expediency—did we deprive them of the first civil right of Englishmen, the exercise of the Parliamentary franchise? We claimed that they should be civilians, but we ostracized them from the pale of civil rights. We robbed them of the most important and the only means which we had of recognizing their civil position. It was not only in the interests of the police themselves but of the community of populations whom they had to control, that he asked for a redress of this manifest grievance.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea), in seconding the Motion, said, that he voted against the Bill last year because it extended to the Irish police, and he should vote against it this year if the Irish police were included. He did not know why in England, in parts of Scotland, and in Wales, the police, because they were police, should be disfranchised. We had no more orderly citizens in the United Kingdom than the police, who were selected from the cream of the working classes. In England the people looked to them as their natural friends, and women and children ran to them in case of difficulty. He was acquainted with all the large cities of the world, and he thought he might say that there was hardly a Police Force in any of those cities which would compare favourably with the Metropolitan Police. He had much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Burdett-Coutts.*)

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, in supporting the Motion, he was speaking for a large number of his constituents, who were anxious that the same privileges they enjoyed should be extended to a class of their countrymen which had hitherto been excluded from them. The police felt it as a great grievance that they had all the disadvantages of conducting an election without being able to participate in it. He was sure the privilege of voting would not be abused by the police, but used for the advantage of the State. It might be argued that there might be some fear on the part of citizens unless they followed the example given with regard to voting by a police officer; but if such an argument had ever applied, he contended that it was entirely removed by the provisions of the Ballot Act. Formerly electoral disabilities attached to *employés* in various branches of the Civil Service, including the Post Office and the Customs. The reason was, he suggested, the same as that for which the police were now disfranchised, and which he had indicated—namely, the possession of power and the fear which this might involve, and as the disability in the case of those officials had been removed, it had become an anachronism in the case of the police. One very distinct grievance of the present system was that a person who had been a police officer might be disqualified from voting for considerably longer than the prescribed six months after he had resigned. By the provisions of the Registration Acts, the Revising Barrister was bound to strike off the names of those incapacitated from voting, and that would include the case of a police officer. The lists were made out in June or July, and if a police officer retired soon after the registration he would be disqualified for 12 months—that was, until the next revision—although the Police Acts limited the incapacity to six months, and every possible cause of disqualification had ceased. That seemed to be an incidental result which almost demanded the passing of a Bill of this nature.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe), in rising to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, he opposed the Bill, not because he believed that the police were not well qualified and entitled to have a vote, but because he considered that the question ought not to be considered before the greater question of the removal of the disqualification of sex. There was one strong reason for enfranchising the police. It was desirable to prevent them becoming a military force; they should become citizens, and, so far as possible, they should have the same interests and form the same ideas as other citizens. He regretted to see that, year by year, there was a growing tendency in the opposite direction. Year by year the police of this country were becoming more of a military force; they were becoming a kind of standing army under the control of the Home Secretary. That was the case in London, and it was becoming, year by year, more and more so in the Provinces. He believed that nothing would do more to counteract that tendency, and make the police full and free citizens in every sense of the word, than entrusting them with the franchise. The Scotch burgh police had the vote already, and his own experience obtained in contesting a Scotch Burgh constituency was that they were intelligent and well qualified to discuss and decide questions of politics. He (Mr. McLaren) might be asked why he opposed this Bill, and he admitted that the question was a pertinent one; but if hon. Members would look upon the Notice Paper, they would see that he had given Notice of an Amendment, which, however, he understood it would not be in Order for him to move, or he would have proposed—

> "That this House, without expressing any opinion against the enfranchisement of the police force, declines to remove the electoral disability of persons employed in or in connection with the police until it has dealt with the electoral disability of sex."

He was not going to discuss the question of women's suffrage. It would not be in order to go into the reasons why the suffrage should be granted to women; but he desired to state, as briefly as possible, the reasons which induced him to take the course he proposed to do. He should like to state merely one or two of the leading points relating to the history of this question during the past few years.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understood the hon. Gentleman was going to make a general reference to the fact that one of his reasons for objecting to the enfranchisement of the police is that the enfranchisement of women should precede or accompany it. I do not think a discussion on the past history of the women's suffrage question would be in Order.

Mr. McLAREN said, that perhaps he had put it too widely. What he wished to show was this—that again and again, when the question of the enfranchisement of women came up, its advocates had been told that they must wait until those questions for the enfranchisement of men then before the House should be disposed of, because to mix up the question of the enfranchisement of women in these discussions would be detrimental to the interests of men. He thought the time had arrived when the validity of that argument should no longer be acknowledged. Therefore, he was strongly of opinion that the House should not proceed to deal with a removal of any other disqualification until it had dealt with the disqualification of sex. If they dealt with the question of enfranchisement at all, they ought to take that which was most important first. It might be said that the enfranchisement of the police and the enfranchisement of women were not alternatives. It might also be said that they would have a Bill before them on the 20th of July dealing with the enfranchisement of women. He admitted that there was a certain amount of force in the latter argument, and he desired to state, in connection with it, that in raising the present issue he was acting upon his own responsibility, and was not acting on behalf of what was called the Women's Suffrage Society. He had not consulted the leaders of that society in any way, and they were not responsible for his action. The position he had taken up might be illustrated by an incident which he believed occurred recently at a railway station. A burly Scotchman appeared upon the platform as a train was moving out, and when the guard prevented him getting into a carriage, he seized the guard, and said, "If I canna, ye shall na'." The result was that the train was stopped for a short time and both got in. He thought that was the position the advocates of women's suffrage were justified in now taking up. They should insist that the enfranchisement of women comes next in order in the matter of enfranchisement, and they should take every opportunity of fixing that subject upon the attention of the House. He observed that of the hon. Members whose names were on the back of this Bill five were in favour of Women's Suffrage. He appealed to them to support this position.

Mr. SPEAKER said, he thought the hon. Member had been allowed sufficient latitude. The enfranchisement of women was a separate question, regarding which there was already a Bill before the House.

Mr. McLAREN begged pardon for having trespassed. Nothing could be further from his mind than to contravene the Speaker's ruling. He should not, therefore, pursue the subject further, but, while he was strongly in favour of the enfranchisement of the police, he was of opinion that the enfranchisement of women should come first. For those reasons he begged to move the Amendment of which he had given notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does any hon. Member second the Amendment?

[The Amendment, not being seconded, was not put.]

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeenshire, E.) said, he had not the least wish to prolong the debate; but as one who had had to administer the law in Scotland, and who had also had an opportunity, for 20 years, of observing the conduct of the police in that country, he must be allowed to add his testimony to what had been said as to the character of the police. As a Scotch County Representative, he desired to protest against the very unfair disability that rested upon the counties of Scotland in contrast with the Royal Burghs in that respect, and he desired to give his cordial and hearty support to the Bill now before the House, because it took away that very unnecessary, arbitrary distinction, which cast a very unjustifiable and cruel disparagement upon the county police. What we wanted was to have confidence in our policemen, that they were men of character and men to be trusted; and he thought that nothing could be worse for the administration of justice than to have a low class of policemen. Everything that could be done to add to their comfort, and to the respect in which they ought to be entertained by all parts of the community and by themselves, ought to be done. Therefore, he hoped that the second reading of the Bill, giving this wise and opportune extension of the franchise, would be adopted without amendment; for, when the proper time came, the object which the hon. Member who moved the Amendment (Mr. M'Laren) had close to his heart, would receive none the less consideration because they had done justice to a class of men who deserved, in the performance of their duty, the respect and the best treatment of this House and the country.

Sir HENRY SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping), in supporting the Bill, said, that he considered the hon. Member (Mr. M'Laren) was one of the strongest supporters of the Bill, though he would reject this Bill until women were enfranchised. He (Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson) had upon more than one occasion advocated the claims of the police to have the electoral disabilities which now lay upon them, and which applied to no other class of her Majesty's subjects, removed. Last year he had introduced a Bill, practically identical with that now before the House, which had for its object the removal of those disabilities from those whom he considered to be one of the most intelligent among the many different bodies of Her Majesty's subjects, and who were quite as intelligent citizens, and took as much interest in politics, as the other public servants whose disabilities had been already removed. He believed his Bill would then have passed, had he not made the mistake, which he frankly admitted it to be, of extending its operation to the Irish Police; but he was now so convinced that it was unadvisable to include the Irish Police in such a measure that in the present Bill they were excluded, and he should be one of the first to offer his most strenuous opposition to the introduction, into this Bill, of any clause which would extend its operation to Ireland. He did not think that there was any danger that the discipline of the police would be interfered with by permitting them to exercise the franchise. He hoped that nobody would adopt the dog-in-the-manger policy recommended by the hon. Member who had just spoken, and that the Bill would be read a second time, for he regarded it as a simple act of justice to an excellent class of men.

Mr. J. A. BLAKE (Carlow) said, that on behalf of the Irish Nationalists, he felt bound to say that he was extremely anxious that the right of voting at Parliamentary Elections should be exercised by the Police of Great Britain, in whom they had every confidence it would be rightly and independently exercised; but they did not think that would be the case in Ireland. He trusted, however, that he should receive a satisfactory assurance that those who supported this Bill would not only themselves not introduce any clause extending the operation of the measure to Ireland, but would oppose, to their utmost, any attempt to insert such a clause in Committee. He must press for an answer upon that point; for whether the Nationalists opposed or supported the Bill would depend upon the nature of the assurances which might be given to them upon that point. There was very good reason for apprehending that the attempt he had referred to would be made.

Mr. BURDETT-COUTTS, with the permission of the House, explained that it was only by accident that a clause limiting the operation of the Bill to Great Britain had been omitted from the Bill. He begged to give the hon. Member opposite (Mr. J. A. Blake) the strongest, the most formal, and the most emphatic assurance that not only would no attempt be made by himself and his Friends to include the Irish Constabulary within the operation of the Bill, but that they would give any attempt to introduce such a clause their most strenuous opposition. He felt that if they were to take any other course they would be guilty of a breach of faith towards many hon. Members.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) said, that as one of the promoters of the Bill, he would resist every attempt to include the Royal Irish Constabulary within its scope. This arose from no want of respect to that splendid body of men, who most admirably discharged the most trying duties. They must all admit the sterling qualities of the Royal Irish Constabulary; but there were, unfortunately, circumstances which made their case in regard to the franchise at the present time different to that of the English police. Some reference had been made to the growing military character of the police force; but he felt sure that it was the desire of the Chief Constables throughout England to maintain the purely civil character of the force. The police, at the present time, voted at School Board elections and for Poor Law Guardians, and no objection whatever had been found to their so voting. There would be no inconvenience in their also voting at Parliamentary elections, and he hoped that, before the close of the Session, this measure of justice would be placed upon the Statute Book. During the period that this measure had been before the country, the feeling in favour of it had increased rather than diminished. No single objection had been put forward to its provisions, or to the principle of enfranchising the police, and the experience of the Chief Constables of boroughs in Scotland, from whom he had received several letters, including one which he would read to the House from the Chief Constable of Edinburgh, who had long police experience both in England and Scotland, was all against the idea that any inconvenience would arise from the admission of the police to the vote. He trusted that the House would agree without a Division to the second reading of this Bill, and so mete out tardy justice to a body of men with whom he had the honour of being closely connected for many years.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) said, that though entirely in favour of the enfranchisement of women, he did not think that question should delay police enfranchisement. The duty of citizenship should carry with it the right to the suffrage, the only incapacity being imprisonment for crime or the receipt of parochial relief.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.) said, he wished to say a few words, rather as the expression of his own views than that of the views of the Government. He thought there was really no valid argument against this Bill, the course of the debate having shown that whether the franchise was a right, as some persons said, or a trust, as he was inclined to regard it, the police appeared equally entitled to possess and exercise it. If it was regarded as a trust, the condition of obtaining it was the possession of the legal qualifications in regard to rating and residence, and also political capacity. It was, he thought, abundantly clear that the police in regard to political capacity and information, and moral qualifications, had a far better claim than most persons in their class of life, and he, therefore, thought that the franchise might be confided to them with the utmost safety. The hon. Member for the Crewe Division of Cheshire (Mr. McLaren) had suggested that the police force was somewhat of a military character. He (Mr. Matthews) agreed with the hon. Gentleman that the spirit of military discipline was not consistent with the fair and frank exercise of political privileges; but he did not believe that the police were tainted with a military spirit. So long as he held his present position he certainly should do his utmost to prevent that. No doubt, in a large city like London, it was necessary to have for the large Police Force what, in some respects, might resemble military organization; but every effort was made to prevent the Police Force obtaining in any way a military tone, and to allow the police when off duty to resume their civic character. The only argument that could be used against the franchise being accorded to them was that it would interfere with the discharge of their duties. But experience had shown that the alarm on this head was not well founded. Some English Chief Constables were opposed to this proposal, but the Chief Constables of Scotland, who had had under them, for many years, men who possessed the franchise, stated that they found no objection to it. Indeed, the Inspector General of Constabulary for Scotland had given him the opinion that there was no reason whatever why the privilege of the vote, which had long been enjoyed by the police in the Royal Burghs of Scotland, should not be extended to the police of the counties. But this he must say, that when the police had the vote, which he trusted they would have by the unanimous assent of the House, they must distinctly understand that discipline must come first, and have the first consideration, and that any breach of their duties at election time, whether in safeguarding the peace at political meetings by keeping order impartially, or of protecting individual voters when exercising the franchise, would be severely punished. With that fact before their eyes, he thought—indeed, he was quite sure—that the police would discharge their duties as faithfully when allowed to exercise the franchise as they did now. He also hoped that nothing that occurred during election meetings would embitter or aggravate the political feelings of the police. It must also be well understood that if this Bill became law, no objection must be raised on behalf of the police to their being removed from the electoral divisions in which they were registered to other divisions. Such removals must be accepted as being incident to their profession; but at the same time, there would equally be an understanding that they would not be wantonly removed out of those divisions for political purposes. It might be worth the while of the advocates of the interests of the police in this matter, to consider whether it would not be better to repeal those clauses in the existing Acts which prohibited the police from canvassing or from taking any other active part in the conduct of elections. With regard to the Irish police, it might be only prudent that he should say a word to guard against its being supposed that, by the course they were taking in connection with this Bill the Government were conceding the point that, in their opinion, the Irish police stood upon such a distinctly different footing from the English and Scotch police that, at no time, could they propose that the Irish police should be permitted to exercise the franchise. He had no authority to speak on behalf of the Irish Government in the matter; but as he was expressing his personal view rather than that of the Government, he could not pledge the latter on the subject. He might, however, say that he did not apprehend that the Irish Government would think it necessary to deal with this subject in connection with this particular Bill.

Mr. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock, &c.) said, he was desirous to add his tribute to the character of the Police Force of the country, and to express his hope that the second reading of this Bill would be passed *nemine contradicente.* He regretted exceedingly the discordant note of his hon. Friend the Member for the Crewe Division of Chester (Mr. McLaren), who, he was afraid, would damage his case by the course he was pursuing. He appealed to him to withdraw his opposition to the Bill. With respect to Ireland, it was a melancholy thing that the necessities of the situation should be such that the Irish Police Force, who were men of high qualities—physical, moral, and mental—should be excluded from the advantages of the Bill; but they must be looked upon as infected by what the Home Secretary called the taint of militarism. He, therefore, sympathized with the proposal that they should be excluded from the scope of the present Bill. But when this House had come to its senses, and had given a better government to Ireland, he sincerely hoped that the Police Force in the Sister Isle would be placed on the same footing as our admirable Police Force in this country.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities) said, speaking also as a private Member, he had had the honour of standing on two occasions for his native city—Edinburgh—where the police had the franchise; and he was in a position to say that their exercise of the franchise on both of these occasions had certainly not caused any public inconvenience. There had not been the slightest suggestion of any abuse of their privilege on the part of the police. On another occasion he had

had the honour of standing for a group of burghs situated in counties. None of these burghs had a Police Force of their own, and the consequence was that the police who served in these burghs, being county police, had no votes. In that particular group of burghs there was a complaint made against one policeman, who had not a vote, of interfering improperly with the election. Probably there was little in it; but it was a remarkable thing that that should have happened while nothing of the sort had taken place in the larger burgh, where all the police had the vote. Speaking entirely as a private Member, he sincerely hoped the Bill would be read a second time, and would pass into law.

Mr. PULESTON (Devonport), in rising to support the Bill, said, he hoped that the Government would show their approval of this measure by consenting to afford special facilities to enable it to become law this Session. He was unwilling that the second reading should be taken upon the basis alone of the fact that the police were a civil force, because, although that was a very good reason, hon. Gentlemen did not seem to be aware that the soldiers, sailors, and Marines have now a vote. The Marine Corps always voted, and a regiment when stationed in a constituency had a right to the suffrage just as anybody else, and so had also the sailors. He appreciated the suggestion of the Home Secretary that they should guard against giving the public any reason for supposing the police were acting in a partizan manner by guarding against their having a right to canvass; and the police would readily recognize that when they were obliged to be removed from one district to another. The hon. Member for the Crewe Division of Cheshire (Mr. M'Laren) had suggested that the Bill should not be allowed to pass unless they gave women the franchise. Why should they be asked to ignore and throw out a Bill of that kind when they were all in favour of it, merely because they had not passed another Bill which some of them were opposed to? The Women's Franchise Bill had been lost not through the action of the Conservative Party, but in consequence of the non-fulfilment of the pledges which had been given by a large body of Liberal Members. The hon. Member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Stephen Williamson) would recollect that when the Women's Suffrage Bill was before the House, he (Mr. Puleston) and a great many others on that side of the House were in favour of it, but hon. Gentlemen opposite ran away from their pledges, and the Bill was thrown out.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.) said, he had opposed this Bill last year on the ground that the Irish police were included, but he should give this Bill his hearty support. He believed that the police would exercise the vote with great advantage to all parties. With the sentiment which fell from the hon. Member for Westminster (Mr. Burdett-Coutts) he quite concurred, and that was, that if the Police Force were to exercise the vote we must take all the consequences, and allow them to take part in public meetings. There was no reason why, if police were entitled to vote, they should not attend political meetings. At the same time, he should be opposed to the extension of the franchise to the Irish police, because they were really a military body. He wished the hon. Member for Crewe (Mr. M'Laren) would withdraw the Amendment of which he had given Notice. He (Mr. Handel Cossham) desired that the Police Force should be dealt with upon their own merits. He had many opportunities, some years ago, of receiving some very remarkable testimony in favour of the principle of this Bill.

Mr. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) said, that as the Irish Members had reason to look with suspicion upon this Bill, and as it would be in the power of any hon. Member to move that it should be extended to Ireland, they should ask an assurance from some Member of the Government that no attempt would be made in this House or elsewhere to extend this Bill to Ireland. He could conceive nothing more improper than to extend this Bill to Ireland, because the position which the police occupied in Ireland was very different from that which they occupied in England and Scotland. In England and Scotland the police were local men, who had an interest in a certain locality, and were not liable to be shifted from one end of the country to the other. He might say that, as a whole, the men were not violent politicians. But in Ireland they had the franchise, under the provisions of which the compulsory removal of a man for a single fortnight from one locality to another would deprive him of his vote. The police were officered by men hostile to the people, and the police were liable to be shifted about from place to place at a moment's notice. If they gave policemen votes they must go further and give them the right to nominate or second a candidate; and if a policeman were to nominate or second one of the Nationalist Members he would be hunted out of the force.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.) said, he was surprised that the Government had not given the assurance mentioned. It was not too much to expect from the Government an assurance that the principles of this Bill should not be extended to Ireland without giving them an opportunity of discussing the matter. He did not admit that there was any reason to fear that if the franchise were given to the policemen in Ireland they would use it in a manner unfavourable to the Nationalist Members. He believed that there was no unanimity on this subject to be found in either of the two sections of the Irish Representatives. The attitude of the Government showed that they considered it invariably incumbent upon them to do exactly the reverse of that which the Nationalist Members desired.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, he was desirous of saying that he was not prepared to inflict any disabilities upon the Irish police. If the English and Scotch police were enfranchised, he hoped the Government would not consent to exclude the Irish police from the Bill, but would give them the like privileges.

Sir JOSEPH M'KENNA (Monaghan, S.) said, he thought that the Government should give an assurance that if they intended to extend the franchise to the police in Ireland this Session, they should do so by a separate Bill. He had no fear of any kind about the Irish police, and he thought that if the subject came on for discussion it would be discussed in a manly and proper way. He thought they were entitled, at all events, to an assurance that if it was intended to extend the franchise to the Irish police, that intention should be given effect to by the introduction of a separate Bill, which he by no means promised to oppose.

Mr. MATTHEWS said, he could assure hon. Members from Ireland that their opinions were listened to with as much consideration as those of any other section of the House. The Government had no desire to oppose their wishes; but it was not their fault that their opinions were unhappily so much at variance with those ordinarily expressed by hon. Members opposite. If he abstained from pledging the Government on this matter, it was simply because he did not know the views entertained by the Irish Executive. They had not considered this Bill, and, therefore, it was simply as a matter of courtesy to his Colleagues, who were not in the House, that he abstained from giving the pledge.

Mr. CHANCE said, he wished to ask whether he understood the Home Secretary to give his pledge that the Government would not permit this Bill to be used as a vehicle for extending the franchise to the Irish police?

Mr. MATTHEWS said, he could not promise for private Members of the House; but he thought, however, he could give the assurance asked for by the hon. Member—that if it was thought desirable to extend the franchise to the Irish Constabulary the Government would not attempt to do so by means of this Bill, but in a separate Bill.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Monday* next.

LAND TENURE (SCOTLAND) BILL

(*Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Barclay, Sir George Balfour, Dr. Farquharson.*)

[BILL 19.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire), in moving that the Bill be now read a second time, said, it was unnecessary for him to dilate upon the present unfortunate position of agricultural interests in this country. The facts were sufficiently evidenced by unpaid rents, unlet farms, ruined tenants, as well as ruined landlords, and the considerable extent of land going out of cultivation, abandoned by both landlords and cultivators. This state of matters had been going on for the past 10 years from bad to worse, and they might well ask what Parliament or the landlords had done to avert the disaster which seemed to be impending. He did not know that the agriculture of the country had been sensibly benefited by the Royal Commission appointed some years ago, or by the concessions given by the Agricultural Holdings Act, as they had been of too niggardly and uncertain a character. They failed to give the tenant that security of tenure necessary to stimulate that higher degree of cultivation which was the only means of enabling him to meet with and contest against foreign competition. Although the agricultural depression might be due, to some extent, to bad seasons, the main cause of the existing difficulty, in his view, was the low price of agricultural produce, resulting from the competition of other agricultural countries. Farmers did not complain of the abundance of food, but that their hands were tied, that they were overburdened with high rents, and other disabilities which it was in the power of Parliament to remove, and that, unless that were done, they could not enter into competition with farmers abroad. It seemed to him that the only hope for agriculture in this country was to place the farmers, as much as possible, in the advantageous circumstances possessed by foreign producers. Take the case of the Western States of America and the North-West of Canada as compared with this country. There the farmers owned the land; and even admitting that their farms were mortgaged, that would only amount to a tax of about 2*s.* per acre. They cultivated almost exclusively with their own labour, or that of their families; and even with 100 acres, he did not think the farmer would have to pay more than £30 for labour for outside help. The farmers in America and Canada had one disadvantage, however, in competing with the British farmer, and that was the large amount of transport they had to pay. The existing Atlantic rates was no criterion; for wheat was at present brought from New York to London at a cheaper rate than from places within 20 miles of the Metropolis. Taking the railway transit alone with the average Atlantic freight, the cost to the American producer was about 10*s.* per quarter; while the average cost of transit to the British farmer was 2*s.* 6*d.*; leaving an advantage to the British farmer of 7*s.* 6*d.* per quarter, or about 30*s.* per acre. That was a very substantial advantage; and if the British farmer had free hands and security of possession, he would be still able to maintain his ground against the foreign producer, and, at the same time, be able to pay a moderate rent. He did not propose in his Bill to make the farmers of this country owners of their own land, neither did he propose that they should have land rent free; but what he did propose was that they should have perfect freedom of cultivation, that they should have security of tenure, such as would give them that assurance which was necessary, in order to encourage that high farming to which they must resort if they were going to meet the competition of the American farmers. Parliament could also offer facilities for the breaking up of large farms into smaller holdings. He was not going into the controversy as to the cost of production on large farms as compared with small farms; but he appealed to the experience of every landowner Member, whether he did not let his small farms with far greater facility than his large farms, and at higher rents per acre. He did not propose to make the subdivision of farms compulsory. He only proposed to give reasonable facilities for subdivision where landlords and tenants were agreed. The first part of the Bill proposed to deal with existing leases, and to make provision for the alleviation of the grievances of farmers in Scotland who now hold under 19 years' leases. That subject had already been discussed at some length by the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Aberdeenshire (Mr. Esslemont) to the Address, at the commencement of the Session, and he did not desire to take up the time of the House by again entering upon the various arguments which were then pressed; but he had some encouragement in recurring to this subject again, because it would be remembered that the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, who was then Secretary for Scotland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), opposed the Amendment, and declared that it was impossible for Parliament to consider such a proposal as to interfere with contracts, that it was quite unprecedented, and that the Government would oppose it to the last. Since then, however, a change had come over the spirit of the dream of the right hon. Gentleman and the Government, because a Bill had been introduced in "another place" which proposed to do for the leaseholders in Ireland that which the Representatives for Scotland unsuccessfully entreated the House to do for the farmers of Scotland. What grounds of difference were there between the tenants of Ireland and Scotland? He (Mr. Barclay) ventured to say that the tenants under the 19 years' leases in Scotland had done as much to improve their land as the tenants in Ireland. The position was exactly the same. But political exigencies seemed to have coerced the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman and the Government; and now they had a proposal brought forward, on the responsibility of the Government, to give to the Irish tenants that relief which they would not give to the tenants of Scotland. He was, therefore, very willing to hope that the Government had come to a better frame of mind upon the question; that they had so acted because they recognized the justice of the case, and that they were not compelled by fear of the Irish tenantry to grant to them what had been demanded for the tenantry of Scotland. It would be a most unfortunate suggestion to put before the tenants of Scotland that the House of Commons would only legislate for them upon compulsion, and that the only hope they had of getting grievances remedied was not on the grounds of justice, but fear. With respect to leases, there was nothing in the Bill to prevent landlords and tenants agreeing to a reduction of rent; but either party could appeal to the Land Court to fix a fair rent. At the conclusion of the lease, the tenant surrendered his farm, and then the landlord and tenant might make such bargain as they thought proper. One of the objections urged against the Amendment on the Address was that almost all the landlords of Scotland had given fair reductions. He was there to deny that such was the case. He only knew of a few cases in which it could be said that landlords had taken up a fair position with regard to their tenants, and had given the concessions which the nature of the case demanded. Reductions had been given in a great many cases, he admitted; but small reductions were entirely inadequate. In many cases the reductions did not exceed 10 per cent; whereas, if the rent had been reduced according to the reduction in the value of produce, there would have been no rent at all. In one or two cases, he had seen that landlords had agreed to give the tenants their farms upon mutual arbitration. The landlord appointed one valuator and the tenant another. He accepted that proposal as fair, where the tenant really had power to appoint his own valuator; but, in the majority of cases, the offer to arbitrate was a farce, as the valuers were appointed by the landlords only. Many of the tenants in Scotland under 19 years' leases took their farms when prices were at the highest rate, and for several years rents had been paid out of capital; but that could not continue. In many cases the landlord simply allowed the tenant to sink into arrears of rent, out of which it was hopeless he could emerge; and he would appeal to landlords whether it would not be wiser to face the difficulty in time, and put the farmers in an independent position by agreeing to give them their farms at such rents as tenants could fairly pay upon the present basis of prices, and when prices of produce increased, then the question of a higher rent could be reconsidered? He did not propose to give the existing tenants any fixity of tenure. He proposed that fair rents should be fixed, and that, at the close of the lease, full compensation for improvements should be given according to the principles laid down in the clauses of the Agricultural Holdings Act. He should be quite satisfied with the clauses inserted in the Crofters Act, and which gave the tenants and crofters in the Highlands full compensation for improvements, on the basis of the increased letting value of the farms due to their improvements. He could not see why the crofters and large tenants in the Lowlands of Scotland, were not on grounds of equity and justice entitled to the same consideration as the crofters in the Highlands of Scotland. The second part of the Bill dealt with the subject of future tenancies. He did not propose, under the Bill, that the State or any authority should interfere to fix fair rents under future leases. He contemplated that landlord and tenant should be free to agree as to what rents were to be paid for the farms; but he made certain statutory conditions for leases which, in his opinion, were indispensable to the successful cultivation of the land. The first condition was that the contract should be in writing; and, in the second place, that the tenure should be in perpetuity, so long as the tenant paid his rent. This latter he considered to be an essential condition of successful farming in the future. [*A laugh.*] Hon. Members might smile; but he did not think they had studied sufficiently the economical facts with which they had to deal. Where was the farmer now who was putting money into his farm? The land of the country was being impoverished from year to year; partly because farmers had less confidence in the future, and partly because they had not money to spend in manures. He wished, therefore, to make it a statutory condition that the man who cultivated the land should have the right of cultivating it in perpetuity, so long as he paid the rent, and did not dilapidate the farm. He provided, also, that the rent should be stated in money; but there was a provision which would enable the landlord and tenant to agree upon a produce rent. When they agreed on the money rent they were at the same time to agree what quantities of certain articles the produce of the farm represented that money; and at the end of every three years, the tenant should be be bound to pay the landlord, the following three years, the equivalent in money of the fixed quantities of agricultural produce specified in the lease, at the average price of the preceding three years. The proposal was, that a money rent should be fixed upon the basis of the average prices of a term of three years. He thought it would be inconvenient to have the rent changed every year. He did not think that three years was too long a period. He provided, also, an arrangement which would enable the Land Court or Commission to fix the average prices continuously of those articles of agricultural produce which might properly be selected to make up a produce rent. In fixing the average he did not confine himself to cereals; but would also take in the prices of beef, mutton, dairy produce, and also other produce of the farm. Taking such an average, they could eliminate, so far as practicable, the element of uncertainty as to the future. These were the principal provisions of the Bill in regard to rent. He had endeavoured to bring about the changes, which seemed to him absolutely necessary, in a way the least injurious to existing interests, and which would be most for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the public. He did not propose, as he had already said, to interfere with the landlord and tenant in fixing future rents; but he thought the State was entitled to see that the cultivator should hold the land on such terms as would stimulate him to adopt the best form of cultivation. No doubt, the change in the position of the landlords would be distasteful to many of them; but it was a change forced upon them, not because of agitation, but by economic causes, which they were powerless to resist. The change had resulted from competition, and the struggle would result in the survival of the fittest. But the system would not be without its advantages for the landlord as well as the tenant; the landlord would in future be saved nearly all the expense of management, for under this system the tenant would do all improvements. That would greatly facilitate the improvement of farms; and, as the tenant would work more economically than the landlord, the improvements would be carried out at a smaller cost It was well known that a large proportion of the income of the Legal Profession was derived from the management of estates. The change would be somewhat unfortunate for the Legal Profession, because under it the landlord would have little difficulty or expense in the collection of ground rents, while the tenants would have to undertake the repairs and improvements that would be necessary. He had now indicated the principal provisions of the measure as to fixity of tenure; and he would only say that the principle which underlaid the measure and which he was endeavouring to carry out was this—that by this system of tenure the tenant would be stimulated to make more out of the land than under any other form of tenure whatever, and if that were so, the tenant would be in a position to give the landlord the largest possible amount of rent that the land would yield. He was not much in favour of the tenant's owning the land. There were certain practical disadvantages connected with such a system; one being that it necessitated the tieing up of the tenant's capital to a much greater extent than would be the case under the system he proposed. In his view, the most desirable form of possession the cultivator could have was to have the land at a moderate rent, with perpetuity of possession. There was one provision of the Bill he wished to call special attention to. That was the part of the measure which proposed that any contract between landlord and tenant should be registered in a public register kept for the purpose. He proposed that the land should be transferred from tenant to tenant by written registered contract, and that the ownership should be determined by entry in the public register, coupled with possession. That seemed to him a solution of many of the difficulties attending the title to freehold land, and the difficulties of transferring land. By the system he proposed the transfer of freehold land would simply be a transfer of rent charges. He contemplated by the measure that the man who cultivated the land should have it in perpetuity, subject to the condition that the rent agreed upon be paid, and that he did nothing to depreciate the farm. The present tying up of ownership of land in various hands prevented the improvement of the land. Under the system he now proposed, seeing that the tenant would have free hands to improve the land, and to invest what capital he desired in it with security that he would reap the fruit of it, the tenant would make the improvements, the landlord would have his rent charges, and, so far as entails and settlements were concerned, any questions that arose would only be between the different beneficiaries, but the public would not be injured by it. The other important matter in the Bill was with regard to the creation of small holdings. He did not propose to make the breaking up of large farms compulsory; but he proposed that Parliament should give facilities for the creation of small holdings. The difficulty landlords felt at present in breaking up large farms into small holdings was in providing capital for the new houses and buildings necessary. Now, he proposed that the Treasury should advance money to an extent not exceeding £2,000,000 in all, for the purpose of erecting the necessary buildings on these newly-created smaller holdings. He stipulated that the holdings should not be smaller than 20 and not larger than 100 acres; and he limited the advances to £5 per acre for holdings of between 20 and 50 acres, and to £4 per acre for holdings of between 50 and 100 acres. These loans would be repaid by instalments, in the first place, by the tenants to whom the money was advanced; but the loan would be secured as a first charge on the holdings, and that would make the loan perfectly secure. At the end of 25 years the tenant — the industrious tenant as he hoped — would have paid off the whole amount of the loan, and the landlord would have for the risk he had incurred during these 25 years, a better security for the due payment of his rent in the future. He believed that would be a very great advantage to the landlords; because it was the universal experience in Scotland that a landlord would get more for a farm of from 50 to 100 acres than for one of larger extent. Indeed, it was almost impossible to get tenants for larger farms, and he believed it would grow more and more difficult in the future. What he proposed the Treasury should do, should, no doubt, be done by the landlords themselves in their own interests; but, unfortunately, in these times many landlords were not well situated, and, therefore, he proposed that the Treasury should intervene with Parliamentary sanction to advance up to £2,000,000 sterling for the purpose of facilitating the creation of smaller farms. There were some other provisions in the Bill as to the acquisition of land for public purposes; but he would not detain the House by going over these. He had as briefly as he could stated the principal provisions embodied in the Bill, and he would add that, under the system, the landlords would obtain a much greater rent than under any other. He recommended it on that ground to the landlords; but it would be of great benefit to many of the smaller tenants also. He did not propose to give existing tenants any advantage in the retaking of farms. He proposed that, on the expiry of their present leases, they should make a new bargain; but he proposed that, in doing so, they should have that satisfactory system of tenure which must be come to in one form or another before very long. He would commend the measure as a very conservative one, for this reason, that it would give—more than now was the case—the people an interest in the land. If they had the people of the country largely interested in the land, it was one of the best securities they could have for the stability of their institutions; but, at present, only the few had such an interest. Another effect of the Bill would be largely to increase the rural population, for, by its adoption, they would be able to settle a great many more people on the land. By means of the smaller farms, he imagined that many of the population who were at present landless, would be able to make a comfortable living out of the land. They would also, under this system, get rid of the complaints with regard to, and at the same time very much relieve, the pressure of unskilled labour drifting from the country into the towns—a cause which had aggravated the distress of most of our large towns. If the people had a chance of living in the country, they would remain there; but, under existing circumstances, they were gradually being compelled to drift away to the towns. The increase of the rural population would also create an increased demand for our manufactures, and they would have more consumers and not necessarily more producers. If Parliament laid down a reasonable, a just, and an equitable system of tenure which would open up the means of livelihood, he thought they would spread contentment and industry throughout the country; and he had very great confidence that the system would stimulate the prosperity, not only of the rural districts, but also of the towns—not only of agriculture, but also of manufactures—and would produce a prosperity not less great, but perhaps more permanent, than that which followed upon the adoption of a Free Trade policy in this country. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeen, W.), in rising to second the Motion, said, that after the full exposition which the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) had given, he did not intend to detain the House at any length regarding the provisions of the Bill. If this Bill were passed, the relief given to the agricultural industry of Scotland would undoubtedly be very great. The Bill would be beneficial in three different directions. In the first place, it would be distinctly beneficial in the case of the tenantry. There was to be an opportunity for the revision of rents under 19 years' leases. There was to be given security of tenure, under which alone a tenant would have inducement sufficient to put into the land what was necessary to produce sufficient crops to benefit himself. Another important point was that under this Bill the tenant would be rewarded for keeping his farm up to the highest point of agricultural fertility. It was a great drawback that the Agricultural Holdings Act did not make that secure. The efforts of farmers to keep up their holdings to the highest point of fertility had been used against them by landlord or valuer in putting on an increased rent at the end of the lease. Under this Bill the tenant would be amply recompensed by the increased value of the tenant right. Then he would have the advantage of free cropping. Of course, the tenant would not be such a fool as to do anything which would diminish the fertility of the soil, and therefore he could be trusted with that freedom. He (Dr. Farquharson) advocated this Bill also in the interests of the landlord. He was himself a landlord—a confession which it required some courage to make now-a-days in that House—and he was certain, after looking over this Bill very carefully, and considering its provisions, that it was framed quite as much in the interest of the landlord as in the interest of the tenant. It would be a substantial advantage to the landlord. In the first place, the rent would be very much safer than it was at present. Then the landlord would be relieved of all expense of making improvements. He himself would be able to cut off every year sums of money which he was now compelled to spend on improvements. If he had not spent these sums, he should now be in a very tolerable financial condition, instead of being, he was sorry to say, somewhat in the other direction. Best of all, he would point out that, under this Bill, the tenant would get compensation by a sure and certain method instead of getting it under the Agricultural Holdings Act under conditions of litigation, annoyance, and expense, which not only very often put him on bad terms with his landlord, but often prevented him from getting his due. Although a well-meant measure, the Agricultural Holdings Act had completely failed to give that confidence to the tenants which they required in the present depressed condition of agriculture. Then they were to have a Land Court to settle arrangements instead of the present hazardous plan of valuation. They knew what valuation meant. It meant that one valuer was appointed by the tenant and another by the landlord, that these disagreed, and that then the oversman came in and settled the matter according to his own views. The Land Court was well defined and carefully arranged—to be presided over by a Judge of the Court of Session. He had no doubt that under it agricultural arrangements would be carried out with far greater advantage both to landlord and tenant than they now were. Thirdly, he advocated this Bill in the interests of the general public, because it stood to reason that if the tenant had greater confidence that every improvement he made on the land would be absolutely his own, he would naturally put more into the land, and the more he put into the land the more would come out of it. The public would get the advantage of the increased produce. Then the tenant would not—so often as was the case at present—allow the land to run out in the latter part of the lease. The tenant would get his compensation from the incoming tenant in tenant right, and, of course, it would be to his advantage to keep up the highest point of fertility right to the end of the lease. A good many objections had been made at various times to proposals of this kind. It had been said that they would act very injuriously against the smaller class of tenants—that the agricultural labourer who had saved a little money, and wanted to take a farm, would not be able to compete with richer men for the tenant right. There would have been a good deal in that objection if it had not been that it was completely covered by the landlord's pre-emption. Then they had heard something of a landlord being only a rent-charger. If, however, the landlord was a sure rent-receiver, he would occupy a valuable position. He did not see why a landlord should be on worse terms with his tenants or get less pleasure out of his land under this Bill than was the case at present. A great many of the disputes between landlords and tenants arose in connection with improvements, but under this Bill the tenant would entirely make his own improvements. He should hope that the relations between landlords and tenants, instead of being injured, would rather be improved. In connection with the Irish Land Act, they were told that when property was sold round the residence of a proprietor, he ceased to live in the country; but the study of the recent Blue Book proved the entire fallacy of that statement. He had not the slightest doubt that, even if the tenants round a landlord's residence were in this condition of independence, the landlord would still remain and enjoy his position, and confer the benefits which a resident landlord always did. He had great pleasure in supporting the Bill, and hoped they might be in a position that day to arrive at a second reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. J. W. Barclay.*)

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, that though he represented a London constituency, he was a Scotchman with some knowledge of his country, and he begged to move the rejection of this Bill, which was ill-advised, unnecessary, and uncalled for. The hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) stated that for the past 10 years agriculture had been going from bad to worse owing to the depreciation of prices of produce. The remedy was certainly not to be found in this Bill. It proposed to give security of tenure to the tenant, which was, no doubt, a very good thing in itself. But in the present state of affairs in England and Scotland, with so many farms vacant, any tenant who paid his rent was practically quite secure in his holding. He knew many instances in Forfarshire and Kincardineshire where tenants held under 19-year leases, and who found no difficulty in getting them renewed; and he knew instances in which farms had remained in the same family for several generations. The tenants of Scotland did not want the whole system of land tenure remodelled on the lines of Irish legislation, for the Irish Land Acts of 1870 and 1881 were proved to be gigantic failures. The only way of fixing a "fair" rent was to allow the laws of supply and demand to have free scope, and by agreements between man and man. Any attempt by third parties to fix a rent which should be fair for 15 years, must break down. The Bill also proposed to create perpetuity leases. But this would be most unjust. Why should a landlord be compelled to lease his land in perpetuity to anyone? Then, as to the proposal for a re-valuation every three years, he would point out that a tenant might let his farm run down just before the re-valuation, in order to get a low rent.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: I do not propose that there should be any change in the rents except as depending on the value of the produce. There is to be no re-valuation of the farm.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER: No; but it depends on the amount of produce on the farm.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: Not at all. Read the clause.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER said, he objected to the power given to Local Authorities to compulsorily acquire sites for dwellings. Such a power would enable a Local Authority to cut up a large estate and ruin it. Three-fourths of the land of Scotland was grazing land, and a proposal to cut out portions of large estates and pitchfork small farms throughout the country would work very badly. It would not be fair or equitable towards the landlord to empower Local Authorities to purchase land beyond their own district. This piece of legislation, which was an ill-advised, ill-digested measure, was one of the least desired and least required of any he had ever seen in his life. It was not asked for by the people of Scotland. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. R. G. Webster.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. ANDERSON (Elgin and Nairn) said, he thought it rather curious that when a Bill of this importance had been proposed by the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) and supported by the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) no one on the part of the Government, or on the Conservative side of House, who was in any way familiar with the subject, should have risen to address the House upon it. He assumed, from the silence of Conservative Members who represented Scottish county constituencies, and who were themselves landlords, that they admitted that a measure of this kind was urgently wanted in many respects by the tenant farmers of Scotland, and their silence did them credit. At any rate, he should be very much astonished to hear any of them deny that the hon. Member for Forfarshire had brought forward an overwhelming case for the interference of this House. But what did hon. Members do in this case? They knew that the Government had attempted to prevent the Bill being discussed, because one hon. Member had blocked it; and now, when it had come on for discussion, they selected an hon. Member for a London constituency to move its rejection. That hon. Member knew very little about it.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER: My claim to speak on a Scottish question is that I am a Scotsman.

Mr. ANDERSON said, he did not mean to say the hon. Member had not a perfect right to speak on matters relative to his native country. There were many Scotsmen who had not been in Scotland for a great many years, and who did not know what was going on among the Scottish agricultural population; and when he found that a born Scotsman, like the hon. Member, had found a refuge in St. Pancras, he could not help thinking he had not spent much time among the agricultural population of Scotland, and was not entitled to tell the House that this measure was not wanted. He hoped the House would consider that, perhaps, he (Mr. Anderson) had some right to speak on this question, because he represented a constituency that was deeply interested in it. He had from time to time discussed the question with his constituents, and only last week he had communications with many farmers in the North of Scotland respecting it. Such was the condition of agriculture in Scotland at the present moment, that the case of tenants under existing leases was absolutely desperate. It must be admitted that the existing rents for land in Scotland were far too high. Farmers were bound, under these leases, to pay these high rents. They struggled to pay them, and did pay them; and to a great extent they had paid them out of their capital — so much so that he was sorry to say that many who were called substantial farmers had very little of their capital left. They had sunk a great portion of it in their farms, and they were in this position—that, if they left, they had no means of getting it back. The present Agricultural Holdings Act did not give them any remedy. Everyone knew that the present law was inedequate, and he ventured to submit, when they had tenants in this condition, that nothing could be more reasonable than a provision for fixing fair rents, such as was introduced in the first clause of this Bill. That seemed to him one of the most important provisions. The next seemed to him also to be of great importance—namely, to practically abolish the schedules of the Agricultural Holdings Act. Then came the question of disposing of the tenancy. He had often asked the question, why could not the tenant of a farm be able to dispose of his tenancy? It seemed to him most extraordinary that, if he wanted to go to some other part of the country, that was the only thing he could not dispose of. It seemed to him if that could be done it would encourage farmers to expend capital and improve their farms. The question of allotments was one of very great importance, and he thought the Conservative Party had come to the conclusion that it was one of their cardinal principles. The principle of the compulsory purchase of allotments was admitted by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) in the now famous Dartford speech; and since then they had also understood that the "three acres and a cow" policy was accepted by the Conservative Party. Therefore he was astonished at the remarks of the hon. Member opposite.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER said, that he had not spoken against the principle of allotments, but against the manner in which it was given effect to in this Bill.

Mr. ANDERSON said, he failed to see the distinction. He had never heard of any other principle of allotments than that which was embodied in their Bill—namely, that of giving Local Authorities power of compulsory purchase. It was of the highest importance that this House should encourage the agricultural labourers of the country to look to the time when they could get land for themselves. At the present moment it was absolutely impossible in many parts of Scotland for an agricultural labourer to get land. This was only a fair concession to make to the agricultural labourers of Scotland. He appealed to hon. Members not to vote against a Bill of this kind. Hon. Members opposite seemed to think that no reforms were to be carried out in reference to the land, until they had a rebellion in the country. Although there was no open agitation in Scotland, there was a very deep feeling among the tenant farmers on this subject. And if the opinion of the Scottish tenant farmers were taken, he believed they would be unanimous in their support of this Bill. ["No, no!"] He knew the lairds would not be unanimous. He was speaking of the tenant farmers. If the lairds persisted in saying "No," they would bring about an agitation such as they had had in Ireland. Feeling that many of the proposals of this Bill were most essential, and were desired by the tenant farmers of Scotland, he hoped the second reading would be agreed to.

Mr. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central) said, that, probably, the hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. R. G. Webster) had had as much experience on this subject as the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn (Mr. Anderson), whose experience in Scotland, so far as he knew, had been confined to the two brief canvassing expeditions in which he had contested his seat. Before reading the Bill he looked to see who were the hon. Members whose names were upon the back, and he believed that everyone of these Gentlemen sat for constituencies in the North of Scotland. They in Scotland had always thought that the people of Aberdeenshire were those best able to take care of themselves; but now they found that the Aberdonians were the very people who were coming and asking Parliament to interfere with their contracts. He did not know what warrant the hon. Member for Elgin and Nairn had for saying that rents in Scotland were far too high, unless it was that in the course of his canvass he had met with farmers who were of that opinion. But the hon. Member took it upon himself to speak for the whole of Scotland. With regard to the Dartford speech, although they, on that side, agreed with the main part of the programme there laid down, they had not committed themselves to the whole of it, and certainly not to the compulsory purchase of allotments. In fact, he was not sure that the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) had proposed it. He did not agree with the hon. Member that the tenant farmers of Scotland would vote for the Bill. At all events, if the hon. Member came to the county which he (Mr. Baird) knew best, he was perfectly sure he would not gain the seat. An hon. Member in supporting the Bill spoke of the advantages to the tenant farmers and others of having perfect freedom of cultivation. He (Mr. Baird) considered that the tenant farmers had already freedom of cultivation. There were very few landlords in Scotland who would interfere with a good tenant in regard to his methods of cultivation. Reductions of rent had been given in many instances to a much greater extent than 10 per cent. In some cases 30 per cent had been conceded. With regard to the disadvantages arising from the fall of prices, he might point out that, on the other hand, there had also been an enormous decrease during the last two years in the price of artificial manures. If this Bill passed, the interest of the landlord in his own estate would disappear altogether.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY: The rent-charge will remain.

Mr. BAIRD: The hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) pointed out the advantages to the landlords of getting rid of the expense of improvements. All he (Mr. Baird) could say was that it had been a great pleasure to him as a landlord to make those improvements for a good many years; but if this Bill passed, he should leave them to his tenants, and whether they would be as efficiently carried out by the tenants as they had been by the landlords remained to be seen. Then it was said that the expenses of management would be abolished. To a certain extent, no doubt, the expenses of management would be abolished by the provisions of the measure; but against that they must put the expense of the litigation that would take place between landlord and tenant. Great improvements had been carried out under the old system; and he appealed to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Haldane) whether he had ever seen a county in England or Scotland brought into such a magnificent state of cultivation as the county of which he was the Representative? He objected to the discussion of the whole system of land tenure in Scotland on a Wednesday afternoon in a thin House, and, in his opinion, a Bill of this nature —which revolutionized the whole land tenure of Scotland—should be brought in by a responsible Government, not by a private Member. The Bill was most drastic, and not only did it alter the whole system of land tenure in Scotland, but it introduced the Irish system of legislation, introducing the three F's—fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale. Fixity of tenure and free sale he objected to altogether. He could not object to fair rent; but he objected to the system by which fair rent was to be established, and he wished that it should remain as it always had been, a matter of arrangement between the man who wished to hire the land and the landlord. He denied that the old land system of Scotland had broken down. What was wanted was not a new system, but fair rents under the old system. He believed that if the farmers of Scotland received a reduction of rent they would not desire any of the other provisions. One provision, he must say, he agreed with—and if the hon. Member would bring in a separate Bill dealing with that he would support him—namely, a Bill to provide for money being advanced to landlords, for the purpose of breaking up large holdings and erecting the necessary buildings. The tenants, no doubt, used to have a great grievance in respect of unexhausted improvements; but that grievance had been met to a considerable extent by the Agricultural Holdings Act of Scotland. This Bill proposed to do in Scotland what had already been done in Ireland, and he did not think the results of the land agitation in Ireland were such as to induce hon. Members to apply them to Scotland. The Bill provided also for dual ownership; and he had always considered that the most objectionable feature of the result of the Irish Land Act, and, for his part, he would much sooner be purchased out altogether. If the House was to interfere with the relations between landlord and tenant in Scotland it would be much better to buy out the landlords at once. In the part of Scotland with which he was acquainted, the South and South-West, there was no feeling in favour of this Bill. The tenant farmers had been getting substantial reductions of rent, and they did not wish to be interfered with in regard to making their contracts, and he hoped the House would not consent to read the Bill a second time.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeenshire, E.) said, he could well understand that there was no special call from the Central Division of Glasgow, which the hon. Member (Mr. Baird) represented, for that Bill, nor did he expect that there would be; but, if the hon. Gentleman spoke for the West of Scotland, he could only say that since he (Mr. Esslemont) moved an Amendment on the Address in regard to Scotch leases, he had been inundated with letters from tenantry in the West of Scotland, saying that they did indeed feel extremely the present depression of agriculture, and pleading with and praying him not to relax his efforts. The writers said that the dread of landlords and factors was continually upon them, because the factors and the landlords had been coming down upon those who were known to be agitators for the reform of the Land Laws of Scotland, and men had been sequestrated for no other reason than that. In fairness to the hon. Member who had just sat down, he must say that he knew a good deal about the family of the hon. Member, and that they, as well as the hon. Member himself, had been among the most improving proprietors in Scotland, and had done a great deal for the improvement of agriculture, and for the advantage of tenants. He (Mr. Esslemont) did not hold exactly the same views as his hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) on the question of dual ownership; and he rather agreed with the hon. Member for the Central Division of Glasgow that it would be, perhaps, better to put an end to that system, and that some means should be adopted by which the cultivator of the soil should, in point of fact, become proprietor. But, at the same time, he must say he was rather surprised at some of the doctrines enunciated by hon. Members on the other side of the House. With respect to the Dartford speech, it had disappeared from view, and its author, the distinguished Member of the Government who was responsible for it (Lord Randolph Churchill), had disappeared too. ["No, no!"] Why, nothing else but closure and coercion, which had replaced it, had been before the House ever since the Session began; and the programme of the Dartford speech had been relegated to the dim and distant future. So far as hon. Gentlemen opposite were concerned, he should be glad to hear a responsible enunciation of policy on behalf of the Government on this question. The right hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) had introduced several Bills for the compulsory purchase of land for allotments; but, now, hon. Members opposite seemed to go against that policy; but he supposed that they were prepared to vote against the right hon. Gentleman on the question. The principle of compulsory purchase was admitted, and the only question to be settled was that of compensation. Compulsory purchase was no new principle. It was only looked upon as a monstrous thing when it was applied to tenants getting land from the proprietors. He would be astonished if any hon. Member would stand up and say that a proprietor had the right to resist the purchase of land for any public purpose, provided he was fairly compensated. The hon. Member for the Central Division of Glasgow said that tenants who went in for good husbandry were always allowed freedom of cultivation; but, if that was so, why did proprietors insert in their leases, that a tenant who deviated from a certain course would be liable to pay a heavy fine? Then they were told that reductions of 10 or 15 per cent on the rents were being made. He (Mr. Esslemont) had seen many receipts for those reductions, and, as a general rule, they embodied a clause whereby, if any improvement belonged to the tenant at the end of the lease, the 10 or 15 per cent was to be deducted. It was in the power of the landlord, in the same way, to say that, if he allowed a change of cropping, the sum due to him for that change would be a deduction at the end of the lease. Then, the hon. Member opposite said there was a thin attendance; but that was usually the case when questions appertaining to Scotland were being discussed. Would the hon. Member deny that, if there was any hope of practical legislation, there would be a large attendance? The hon. Member, however, had paid a compliment to Aberdeenshire, and far be it from him (Mr. Esslemont) to reject it. The hon. Gentleman said he understood that the people of Aberdeenshire were as well able to look after their own interests as the people of any other county of Scotland. He (Mr. Esslemont) quite agreed with the hon. Member in that statement. It was on account of their intelligence, ability, and discernment of their interests, that they had sent two Members from the city, and two Members from the county, who were entirely in favour of the principle of the Bill; and he did not think it would be denied that these hon. Members to a large extent represented the most intelligent opinion of Scotland upon the principles of the Bill, and it was also a strong reason why the measure should pass. The hon. Member for East St. Pancras (Mr. Webster) was entirely at sea on the clauses of the Bill. It was true that leases had been held by the same family from one generation to another. He knew well about that succession; and he knew how effectively at the end of each lease, the capital that had been created by the tenant was appropriated by the landlord. It was because the tenant had not the accumulations of past generations to stand by, that now he had to look only to bankruptcy for relief. It had been said by hon. Members opposite that there was no agitation in Scotland upon this question. As to that it had been his duty, as well as his endeavour, to put down any agitation which he conceived to be an objectionable or un-Constitutional kind; but he warned the Government and the other Representatives from Scotland that were then present in the House, from information he had from all parts of Scotland, that it would not be possible to resist a very strong agitation in favour of the relief of the tenants of Scotland, and in favour of a large measure of reform of land tenure in years to come. There would be no want of agitation even among the law-abiding people of Scotland. It should be remembered that in consequence of an agitation in the Highlands, the Government had to pass the Crofters Act. He would, however, acknowledge that many of the landlords in Scotland had met their tenants in this crisis in a most generous and ready manner. For instance, one of the largest proprietors in the county he represented had met the present emergency by offering his tenants either the relief due to outgoing tenants, or a re-valuation of their farms. But, generally, he knew that many more in the south of Scotland had met their tenants more fairly than in the north. In Aberdeenshire there was practically no fall in the rent roll whatever, and they had positive proof that the landlords in that county had not readily met the claims of the tenants. Legislation, however, was sought not on account of the benevolent and generous landlords, but for those who had not done their duty; and those who had met their tenants would not be touched by any Bill like this. Without committing himself to every detail of the Bill, he gave it his cordial support.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) had depicted the state of Scotland with great fairness and impartiality. But he (Mr. Stewart) could not say the same of some of his supporters, and he could not congratulate the hon. Member who had just sat down (Mr. Esslemont) upon the speech he had delivered. All the landlords the hon. Member seemed to know were landlords of the most tyrannical and cruel character——

Mr. ESSLEMONT: I did not say anything of the kind. What I said was, that a large proportion of the landlords had met their tenants in the most generous way, and I wanted this measure for the minority.

Mr. MARK STEWART said, the greater part of the hon. Member's speech appeared to be taken up, not with a criticism of the Bill, but with inveighing against a class of men who were in very depressed circumstances, and had great difficulties to contend with. The hon. Member had stated that when the landlord did give a reduction of rent, it necessarily came off the compensation which was due to the tenant at the end of the lease. That might occur in Aberdeenshire; he did not know whether it did or not; but he had never heard of a case of the kind in the South of Scotland. Many of his friends had given abatements to a very large extent. His Party had been taunted with not giving allotments to labourers; but that was a mistake. With regard to the allotment system, he thought the more occupiers of the land they had in this country the better it would be for the country. They did not wish to tie up enormous tracts of land in the hands of a few men; on the contrary, they were anxious that the land should be better distributed; but no one would buy land in Scotland. In the South of Scotland there were large tracts of suitable land allotments; but no one could be found to buy it, and the consequence was that the land remained in the hands of a few proprietors. What they did object to was, that the Local Authority should come down and seize any choice portion of land on an estate, or a policy, or garden, they pleased. There was nothing to prevent them doing that in this Bill, and the practice would give rise to serious abuses. A Local Authority might seize some choice piece of land close to a mansion house, and convert it into allotments. They might even go outside the precincts of a locality where they had influence, and might claim, in another district, the jurisdiction which they exercised in their own locality. That, he considered, would be most unfair, and it would give rise to all sorts of complaints. He agreed with the hon. Member in the principle of giving allotments. He thought the Local Authority might have power to point out that such and such land was suitable for allotments, and ought to be laid out in allotments; but when it came to compulsory purchase he thought the landlord was justified in having an appeal to a higher tribunal, which would be perfectly fair and unprejudiced — in England, say, to the Local Government Board; in Scotland to some Board that might be constituted. The hon. Member said that the Dartford speech was now quite ignored; but it had been stated to him (Mr. Stewart), on the highest authority, that the principle of the Dartford speech was still adopted, and that measures on its lines would be laid on the Table of the House. He was aware of the great difficulties which the tenants had to endure at the present time; and he thought the landlords, in many cases, did not thoroughly realize the great gravity of the situation. If they had technical education in agricultural matters, such as he proposed, he believed that many of the present difficulties would disappear, and there would be no necessity for such radical measures as that now under consideration. The hon. Member for Forfarshire had stated that the main principle of this inroad upon old legislation consisted in this—that if they adopted his Bill they would get as much as they possibly could out of the land, and that the tenants would have every inducement, not only to work harder, but to make money and acquire a better livelihood and better means of paying their rents. He doubted that very much. He knew this—that there were thousands and tens of thousands of acres of land of a second quality in Scotland. That land had once been brought up to a very high standard of production by the use of artificial manures, but it was now suffering from that cause. It had been thoroughly exhausted, and what that land required was rest. It either must be laid down in grass, or some system of husbandry must be devised by which they might bring it up to its old standard. The Bill before the House would be a very great invasion of contract. It would introduce into the Scottish system fixity of tenure, free rule of culture, free sale, and fair rent. They had succeeded in agriculture better than any other country in Europe. They had reclaimed waste lands, perhaps, on too large a scale; and they had shown that the system hitherto pursued in Scotland was one that had worked well. Up to a few years ago there was no system like the 19 years' lease system, and the tenantry throve under it. He maintained that the proper thing for the landlord to do was to have a revaluation of property, if he could not come to fair terms with his tenants. But that re-valuation must not be made by one valuator, but by two valuators, so that they might have equal justice distributed between landlord and tenant. Hon. Members opposite invited them, on a Wednesday afternoon, in a small and listless House, to overturn the existing system of land tenure in Scotland, in order to satisfy what he hoped was a passing through a rent crisis. They had the bitterest experience of similar or analogous legislation since 1870 in Ireland; and if that did not stand as a warning beacon, he did not know what that legislation had taken place for. It had not done much good to Ireland. If they applied this drastic legislation to Scotland, they would find that, instead of a good feeling between landlord and tenant, and that "gif-gaf" which made good friends, they would have very sad results. In the place of that being as it was at present, the unwritten law of the land, a very different state of things would come rapidly about. As to the proposal for produce rents on the basis of the fiars' prices, his experience was this. Eight or 10 years ago, in one of the Southern Counties of Scotland, a great many tenants had rents based on the price of wheat; but the consequence was that the tenants preferred a money rent. He did not think the tenants of Scotland would be satisfied with the revision of rents every three years, as suggested by the hon. Member; nor did he believe that a multiplication of small farms would tend to increase production. Such a statement was contrary to experience. How was it possible for a small tenant to have the buildings necessary for the health of his cattle? They could not expect the small tenant to have the necessary capital for carrying on agriculture. He did not believe they would ever get any Government to advance the £2,000,000 proposed by the hon. Member for Forfarshire to enable the landlords to break up large farms and erect buildings for small ones; nor did he believe the investment, if made, would be a good one. As it was rents had been reduced in Scotland, not only by 10 per cent, but by as much as 20, 30, and even 50 per cent. While he was convinced that the hon. Gentleman who proposed the Bill was actuated by the best motives, he did not think the proposed legislation of the hon. Member, drastic though it was, if it passed, would effect what he intended, nor would it ameliorate the condition of the tenantry of Scotland. He was entirely opposed to the principles of free sale. Its only effect would be to make the landlords take less interest in the land, and would drive them away out of the country. Old people, also, whom the landlord now employed, would have to go to the workhouse or drop into the large towns. If they injured one class they might be sure they would injure all classes of society, and if they injured the tenant they would injure the landlord and the shopkeeper also. He did not think the Bill was wanted. As regarded fixity of tenure, the hon. Member, he was sure, would receive the support of neither the House nor the country; while, as regards free sale, the country would be dead against him. But with regard to fair rent, he would be very glad if the hon. Member could bring that about in the speediest way.

Mr. H. F. H. ELLIOT (Ayrshire, N.) said, he thought they ought to be grateful to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) for bringing forward the Bill and letting the House know the opinions of the tenant farmers of Scotland, as the honest and industrious farmers were entitled to have their claims fairly considered by the House. But, in his opinion, if this Bill were passed, it would be injurious to the tenants, as well as to the landlords and the country generally. The Bill which was brought in, from the tenant's point of view, was a Bill that would really bind his hands; while the landlords would have no inducement to advance money to be spent on improvements, and but for which large tracts of land would at the present day have been lying waste. There were some good points in the Bill, but there were others which he did not like. The Land Question would have to be faced sooner or later; but he believed it could be postponed for a long time if the landlords tried to live more on their estates, sent away their factors and agents, and went into the question for themselves, and when there was any doubt as to the rent give the tenant the benefit of it.

Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Renfrew, W.) said, he felt thankful to the hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) for giving the House an opportunity of discussing a most important subject. He objected most strongly to the proposal to make in future tenancies in perpetuity. That would not be of very great value to the tenant, and it would be a very great damage to the welfare of agriculture generally. What they ought to do was to enlist the sympathies of landlords and tenants in the same way as manufacturers and their workmen. If the Bill were passed, the landlord would be a simple rent-charger, and he would have no interest in seeing that the buildings were kept up, and in advancing money for improvements. Although agriculture was suffering from great depression at the present time, he hoped that by co-operation and by the improvement of implements they might be able to compete successfully with the immense amount of foreign produce brought into the country. If they took away the incentive to the landlord to advance money, they might be certain they would not have that improvement which was necessary to place the prosperity of the agriculture of the country on a satisfactory footing. He had no objection to the proposal to institute a Land Court. He had always himself endeavoured to meet his tenants in a fair spirit, and he had been in the habit of taking the fiars' prices as a basis upon which to calculate his rents, and in that way he and his tenants had got on uncommonly well. But if that were not sufficient, where landlords and tenants could not agree, he thought it would be an advantage to have a tribunal—such as a Land Court or Commission—which could fix authoritatively what was a fair rent, because landlords were sometimes debarred from making the reductions they might otherwise do owing to the awkward position in which it might place other landlords who were not so able to make similar reductions. The question of allotments should not be dealt with in a Bill dealing with rent and agricultural arrangements, but should be brought in by a Bill dealing with the subject of local government—such a Bill as was promised by the Government, or something like it. With regard to fixity of tenure, if there was a tenant right which was to be purchased by another tenant coming in, and if that man had a large capital, they would really be defrauding the poor man from being able to start in life as an agricultural tenant. In that way they would shut out the class of ploughmen who had really formed the backbone of the farming class of this country. That was an interference with the whole system in Scotland, and in the circumstances it was impossible that anyone who desired the welfare of agriculture could be able to vote for a Bill in which they had fixity of tenure.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): We have an indication of the nature and character of this discussion in the fact that of the four authors of the Bill only one remains in the House at the present moment; two have never appeared at all; two have spoken, but one of the number only spoke, and then disappeared. At the same time, I thoroughly agree with what has been said on this side of the House quite as much as on the other side—namely, that the hon. Gentleman who introduced this Bill—the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay)—deserves the thanks of the House for the interesting speech he has made in doing so. His contributions on the subject of agriculture are always extremely useful to the House; but I say that there is a pretty plain indication that he and his Friends look upon this as a purely academical discussion, not likely—now or in the near future—to lead to practical results. The hon. Member for East Aberdeenshire (Mr. Esslemont) is a very sanguine man, and when he speaks of the unanimity of feeling in Aberdeenshire upon this question, it is only an indication of the extreme power which possesses the inhabitants of that region of looking after themselves. The most astonishing feature about the whole measure is a proposal to carry out what is practically an agrarian revolution for the purpose of getting greater produce out of the land of Scotland; when the fact is that Scotland, of all countries in the world, has, under the existing system, done the most extraordinary and incredible things in the way of obtaining production out of the soil. It is under the system that now exists between landlord and tenant that the farmers of Scotland reclaimed vast tracts of country in Scotland—that in the time of our forefathers were thought utterly unfit for agricultural purposes at all—these have turned it into gardens, and have been able to produce more to the acre than has been raised in any other country in Europe. I want to know whether it is supposed that if the hon. Member's Bill had been brought in in 1820, and had been carried, it is possible for any sane man to conceive that the state of agriculture in Scotland would have been higher than it is at the present moment. [An hon. MEMBER: Yes.] I venture to say that it would have been nothing of the kind. The sums of money which have been laid out by landlords—and I suppose the hon. Member for Forfarshire will admit that the landlords have laid out large sums of capital as well as the tenants—would never—as experience proved—have been laid out if the country had been broken up into small holdings, where the tenant, having no claim upon the landlord at all, because the landlord would have been a mere rent-charger, would have had to expend the money and make the improvement himself. Wherever we found, throughout the world, a person who had to do the work of the soil himself, and to find the capital necessary for improvements, we never did find that the land is properly cultivated—[*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"]—I mean in countries similar to our own—I am not speaking of countries where the farm buildings may consist of a log-hut—in such cases we never find improvements carried out. But, further than that, we are now asked by the hon. Member what difference there is between tenants in Ireland and tenants in Scotland. I think the hon. Member will agree that that is not for those on this—the Ministerial—side of the House to answer, because the distinct ground stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and his friends for their agrarian legislation for Ireland was that the case of Irish tenants is different from the case of tenants on this side of the Channel; and when the Liberal Government dealt with the case of the crofters, the House was told that theirs was also an exceptional case, quite different from the ordinary case of landlord and tenant. Time will not permit me to go at length into the arguments on this matter, and a good deal of what I had intended to say has been said by my hon. Friends on both sides of the House. I would call attention once more to the extraordinary fact that what is now proposed to be introduced by this Bill is the very thing which tenants at their request had excluded from leases a good many years ago. In the year 1850 almost all the agricultural rents in Scotland were wholly or in part calculated according to the price of grain, and not wholly according to money. It was at the instance of the tenants themselves that that was altered, and it was because although at that time it was thought that prices would never go up again after the Corn Law had been repealed, in 1853, 1854, and 1855 large fortunes were made by the tenants of Scotland in consequence of the extraordinary prices to which grain rose in those years. As to what is proposed in the Bill in regard to allotments, there seems to be some confusion in the minds of hon. Members between the question of allotments and that well-known question now described by an expression which has become classic—"Three acres and a cow." The two things are totally different. The object of allotments is to give the agricultural labourer in his leisure time the means of cultivating some small piece of ground by hand, with the view of employing that time to advantage, and to procure for his own use necessaries which he might have to get from a distance. This Bill provides for giving allotments anywhere that the Local Authority may fix. I think the House will agree with me that, until you have a Local Authority of a different kind from what you now have, you will not have a wise or prudent Board for carrying out any system of allotments—certainly not of the broad and comprehensive character contemplated by the Bill of the hon. Member. When you have a system of local government and of Local Boards, then you may without difficulty go into the question of allotments. By the interpretation clause of this Bill, power is taken to take allotments, and the authority may go out of its own jurisdiction to the distance of a mile, to take allotments from anybody who has land. Now, the "authority" is to be a Local Authority, appointed under the Public Health Act. What is the authority in Scotland at present? It is the Parochial Boards in Scotland who were originally constituted solely to look after the paupers in their particular district. [An hon. MEMBER: The Town Councils.] We are speaking of agricultural districts. It is for agricultural neighbourhoods that the allotments referred to in this Bill are primarily to be provided. I am not certain, even if we came to the large burghs, that I should care to have the Town Council going, say, a mile out of the boundaries of the City of Edinburgh to provide allotments to all and sundry. But it is agricultural labourers that are being attended to by this Bill, and you propose to give these extraordinary powers to grant such allotments to Parochial Boards. This, in itself, is sufficient to show how crude and unsatisfactory the proposals of this Bill are. We thank the hon. Member for Forfarshire for carefully studied information—which he always gives us—but I think he will see that it is quite impossible that this Bill can be passed in its present shape—and I do not think the hon. Member could have hoped it would do so. It is certainly quite impossible that the Government can agree to it.

Mr. COCHRANE-BAILLIE rose to continue the debate, when——

It being a quarter of an hour before Six of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned till *To-morrow.*

MOTIONS.

DEEDS OF ARRANGEMENT REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to provide for the Registration of Deeds of Arrangement, Assignment, and Composition, *ordered* to be brought in by Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Howard Vincent, Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Lawson, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 231.]

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS AMENDMENT (BUILDING IN STREETS) BILL.

On Motion of Captain Cotton, Bill to amend the Public Health Acts in relation to Buildings in Streets, *ordered* to be brought in by Captain Cotton, Mr. Seton-Karr, and Mr. Curzon.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 232.]

PRISON (OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend "The Prison (Officers' Superannuation) Act, 1878," as to Scotland, *ordered* to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, and Sir Herbert Maxwell.

Bill *presented,* and read the first time. [Bill 233.]

House adjourned at one minute before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 21*st April,* 1887.

MINUTES.]—Sat First in Parliament—The Lord Churchill, after the death of his father.

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Irish Land Law (58), *debate adjourned.*

Third Reading—County Courts (Expenses) * (48); Merchant Shipping (Fishing Boats) Acts Amendment * (51); Isle of Man (Customs) * (56), and *passed.*

Provisional Order Bill—*Committee—Report* —Local Government (Ireland) (Limerick Water) * (42).

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.—(No. 58.)

(*The Lord Privy Seal, Earl Cadogan.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*The Lord Privy Seal.*)

Lord DENMAN, in moving the rejection of the Bill, said, he opposed it, as he had opposed the Act of 1870, when he was told, at a private meeting of Conservative Peers, that he must not speak against the second reading, on which he ceased speaking and left the room. He opposed the second reading now, on the ground that it tended to make the State the proprietor of the whole of the land in Ireland, with a first claim upon all land that was forfeited. So far from being a message of peace to the Irish tenants, the Bill would constantly lead to all sorts of differences between them and their landlords, by costly, vexatious, and tedious litigation. He was reminded of Tennyson's words—

> "Should banded unions persecute
> Opinion, and induce a time
> When single thought is civil crime,
> And individual freedom mute."

Yet the poet wished to leave the region. He did not even now despair; and, when dividing the House in 1856, only three Irish Peers voted with him—Lords

Clanricarde, Clancarty, and another Peer. In "another place" the Bill was thrown out. He was asked by the Leaders on both sides not to divide the House; and there was a party at the Duchess of Gloucester's, which many of their Lordships were anxious to attend. On the Wine Licences Bill for Ireland he divided the House, contrary to the earnest request of the late Earl of Derby; but the whole country had come round to the opinion that magistrates, and not the Excise, ought to control the licensing of all houses for the sale of intoxicating liquors. He might not be able to find a Teller, but could never agree to the Bill, however altered in Committee. He, therefore, moved that it be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

Earl SPENCER: I sincerely trust the noble Lord who has just sat down will not carry his Amendment to a Division. I shall certainly do all I can to forward the second reading, and I trust the noble Lord will, with his usual regard to the opinion of the House, not divide on this occasion. I do not think I owe any apology to the House for coming forward at this early moment to discuss this important Bill. I have, both in this House and outside this House, frequently discussed this subject. I have always considered that the settlement of the Land Question in Ireland was of the utmost importance, and that, without a final settlement of this question, we cannot expect to have peace and order in that country. Now, my Lords, I regret that the Government have not been able to offer their whole plan on the subject of Irish land. It would have been very convenient and instructive to your Lordships for the purpose of considering the present Bill and estimating its worth if youhad known the whole policy of the Government with regard to this important matter. But, while I say this, I am also bound to admit that there must be a long interval after the passing of a large measure for the settlement of the Irish Land Question before all the provisions of that measure can be carried out. I am, therefore, not altogether surprised that the Government propose to deal with this question in two Bills. I shall think it my duty to refer to some of the Acts which have already been passed on this subject. I shall not criticize the remarks of the Lord Privy Seal on previous Irish land legislation in his opening speech, or touch upon the many thorny points which are now before the country with regard to Ireland. But I wish to refer to one particular point in the land legislation of 1881—I mean that part of the Act which referred to the reductions of rent. I can freely and at once admit that, in theory, I agree very much with what has been said by the noble Duke behind me (the Duke of Argyll) against the principle of the State interfering between landlord and tenant with respect to rents. There are manifest objections to such a course, and we see some of these objections coming up now when we find these difficulties arising with regard to judicial rents. They involve fresh interference by legislation. I fear that is absolutely essential. But, though I say that, I cannot admit that we could have avoided, in dealing with the Irish Land Question, interfering with this question of rent. It was indispensable that some means should be arrived at for solving this question. My Lords, I base my justification on the Report of the Royal Commission presided over by my noble Friend behind me (Earl Cowper). I find in this Report the following statement:—

> "In all, by the operation of the Act, including arbitrations, a rental of £3,227,021 has been reduced to £2,638,549, a percentage reduction of 18·2. . . . . The number of tenants who have had judicial rents fixed up to last August were 176,800 on a rental of £3,227,021, and they held consequently at an average rent of about £18 each."

That is the answer to those who say we ought not to interfere with rents. I believe it can be conclusively proved that it was necessary to interfere with these rents. It was the only means of obtaining justice for those tenants who objected to their unreasonable rents. I need not go further into the evidence before that Commission, though I could quote many specific cases of injustice. I now come to the occurrences of the last few years which have so much affected the question. I allude to the great fall in prices of agricultural produce. I remember, when I was still in Ireland in 1884, that distinguished man (Sir Robert Hamilton) now Governor of Tasmania, whose services, I regret, are now lost to Ireland, discussing with me some of the questions regarding land legislation. He pointed out that very shortly this question of judicial rents would come before us. He said we could not avoid it, because with the fall of prices it would be impossible to maintain these rents. My Lords, the contention of my friend Sir Robert Hamilton was only too soon justified. The crisis occurred last year, and your Lordships will recollect that after the Government of the noble Marquess opposite came into Office Mr. Parnell introduced a measure to deal, at all events temporarily, with the difficulties which had arisen on account of this fall in prices. I, for one, could not have supported all the provisions of that Bill; but, in my opinion, the general principle of it was absolutely right. The Government, however, took a different view, and appointed a Royal Commission to look into the whole matter. The noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) made an important speech on the supposed fall in prices from which I will give one or two short extracts—

> "But though that is the case, I am not at all sure that the judicial rents were not fixed with a perfect consciousness on the part of the Judges that a fall in the price was going on. That fall has been going on now for several years, and it is highly improbable that the Courts, in assigning judicial rents, have not taken that into consideration. . . . . . But if it should turn out that the Courts have made blunders, and that there is that impossibility in any case of paying rent, I think it is not the landlords who should bear the loss. I think this would be one of the cases for the application of the principle of purchase by the State, and that the State, and not the landlords, must suffer for the errors that have been made."—(3 *Hansard*, [308] 68-9.)

I cannot go into the Purchase Question now; but I hardly think that the noble Marquess will be able to carry that part of his plan into effect. But he does admit that, in certain contingencies, it would be necessary in some way to deal with these judicial rents. What was the Report of my noble Friend's Commission as regards this fall in prices?—

> "The fall in the price of produce of all kinds and in all parts of the country has much impaired the ability of the farmers to pay the full rent. And this, following on a previous general restriction of credit by the banks and other lenders of money, as well as by the shopkeepers, has very greatly increased their financial difficulties. Much evidence in proof of this has been laid before the Commission. . . . . Although it is most undesirable to disturb an arrangement which was understood to be a permanent settlement, we cannot put aside the pressing necessities of the Irish tillage farmers, many of whom have lost much of their means, and are besides much indebted to banks, local merchants, and other creditors. The Purchase Act, as we have said, must necessarily be slow in its operation. Tenant right, on which the Bessborough Commission relied as a remedy, is, under existing circumstances, frequently of little value. To force such tenants to sell their working stock in order to pay full rent would be fatal to their future prosperity. The just remedy is to abide by the principle of termly revision already established, but to shorten the period to a term during which no serious error is likely to result. We, therefore, recommend that the term of revision should be shortened from 15 to five years."

That appears to me to be a very remarkable, a very clear, and a well-supported reply given by the Government's own Commission. But it may be said, on the other hand, that when judicial rents are once fixed they ought to be allowed to continue, and nothing should then be allowed to interfere with the direct relations of landlords and tenants with each other. In the great bulk of cases I believe that would be a safe course. I believe the great majority of Irish landlords, as of Scotch and English landlords, have been generous and considerate to their tenants. The real offenders are not these men; but, unfortunately, the good landlords are affected by the law which we are obliged to pass for landlords who are deaf to all reason, who will not listen to the just demands of their tenants, who are not touched by what has been styled the humane but irregular pressure of the Government, and who are deaf to the voice of public opinion. It is against those landlords that you have to move, one or two of whom may set the whole country in a blaze. I should myself distinctly lay down this proposition—that we must in this Bill, if possible, find some method of dealing with judicial rents which are now unreasonable on account of fall in prices. The Marquess of Hartington, in a speech describing what the Government might do, said—

> "I cannot hope that it will satisfy public opinion in Ireland; but it would go far to satisfy the public opinion and the conscience of the United Kingdom."

These are the two propositions we must look for in this Bill. We must see that it deals with tenants whose judicial rents are unjust, and that it deals with those other cases of eviction that have created such a sensation in this country. I shall now proceed to see how the Bill of Her Majesty's Government will deal with those subjects. That Bill may roughly be divided into four parts. The first deals with the procedure of the Land Commission and with certain of the tenants excluded from the benefit of the Land Act of 1881. The second deals with the Purchase Clauses now in force. The third deals with the present process and method of ejectment, and also with the rates; and the fourth deals with the new equitable jurisdiction to be conferred upon the County Court Judges. I shall not trouble the House at any length on the first three divisions. First of all, as to the procedure, that does not, in my opinion, raise any question of principle. I now come to what I consider one of the most important provisions contained in the Bill —in fact, I should call it the principle of the policy which is involved in this measure; I mean the admission of the leaseholders to the benefits of the Land Act of 1881. My Lords, I heartily rejoice that there is no Party difference in regard to this question. But I reserve my criticism on the mode in which it is intended to be carried out. I understand, from those best qualified to judge, that, in their opinion, those leasehold clauses are very defectively drawn. This is a matter for discussion in Committee. The leaseholders who, before the Land Act of 1881, considered their position very favourable in comparison with the other tenants, were, by the operation of the Land Act, placed at a considerable disadvantage. Those tenants are, as a class, the most influential in Ireland, and they are very discontented with their present position. It is important, therefore, that they should be reconciled by a revision of the law. I desire to congratulate Her Majesty's Government on including the town parks in the provisions of their Bill. That I also consider to be a matter of great importance. I observe the Bill says nothing about another class of tenants—namely, small dairy and grazing farmers. Men who know the country have often said to me that if tillage farmers require their rents revised by the Land Courts, small dairy and grazing farmers ought also to be brought under the operation of the Act. In the Report of the Cowper Commission are some recommendations with respect to dairy farmers; but in this Bill there are no provisions dealing with them. I will not deal with the Purchase Clauses of the Bill. All that I will say is that it is very singular that they should have been introduced in such a Bill as this, and that their introduction looks very much as if the Government did not intend, or had very little hope, of carrying a large Purchase Bill this Session. As to the third division, I cannot say that I view with entire satisfaction the very great alteration those clauses make in the process of ejectment. It is proposed that the moment judgment has been given in the Court, a tenant can be converted by a written document into a caretaker. This is a change that ought to be watched with great attention. The present law as to the method of ejectment was deliberately adopted in the Act of 1860. One of its objects was to check needless evictions, and there are many who think that if the clause now proposed is carried it would increase the power of an unjust landlord to bring pressure on his tenants. It is said that the change will prevent a large number of ejectments. I fear, however, that the very contrary may possibly happen, and that the change will only postpone the moment of difficulty when whole armies of soldiers and police have to be sent to support the Sheriff in carrying out evictions. In my opinion we must very fully weigh the arguments connected with this important matter before we attempt to change the law as it is here proposed. Then there is the question of the remission of rates in cases where landlords can prove, to the satisfaction of County Court Judges, that on account of intimidation they are unable to let their farms, or— and in this case it is without intimidation—to collect their rents. That is a serious change. At first sight it seems just that a man who cannot make profitable use of his land should be exempt from the payment of rates. But what will happen? The rates will be thrown upon other landlords and ratepayers. The change, I think, would work great injustice, and would offer a premium on disputes between landlord and tenant. Moreover, there are parts of the country where poverty is so great that the Unions are almost bankrupt, and in one or two cases since I left Ireland have been actually unable to pay their debts. In these Unions the increased rates caused by this provision would bring actual ruin on poor and struggling men. My Lords, I will now come to the fourth division — the equitable jurisdiction which is proposed to be given to the County Court Judges. I cannot welcome this part of the Bill, although, it is, no doubt, intended to meet some of the difficulties I have called attention to. I have seen this part of the Bill described as a "joy to country attorneys and an injury to everyone else." You are applying a law of bankruptcy, originally intended for a mercantile community, to small holders of agricultural property. The machinery was never intended to be so applied. In dealing with this extremely technical subject, I wish your Lordships to understand that, although I fully accept responsibility for what I say, I do not pretend to give my own opinion only, but that I have consulted gentlemen who, I am confident, are the most capable of advising in such a matter. The Bankruptcy Law in Ireland is, I am informed, extremely complex. It involves petitions to a Court; the vesting of the estate in a creditor's assignee; the filing of a schedule of the transactions of the bankrupt for many years past; the personal examination of the bankrupt, and motions without end relating to matters arising out of the proceedings. I am told that the costs of bankruptcy, in proportion to the interests involved, are already exorbitant in Ireland on large estates, and when you apply it to the smaller estates it will be absolute ruin. Let us consider for a moment the condition of these small holders. They are often very ignorant, and they do not always speak the English language. They do not keep accounts, and they have no books to refer to. They often live in small, miserable hovels, and too often their assets are confined to the miserable furniture of those hovels, and amount to only a few shillings, or, perhaps, £2, which may come from the sale of their pigs. It is to such a person that you are going to apply the extravagant, costly, and complex method of bankruptcy. It is said that the Bills of 1870 and 1881 tended, to a great extent, to demoralize the Irish people. I deny that that has been proved; but I will venture to say that the utter demoralization of the Irish tenants will be effected by the Bankruptcy Clauses of this Bill. On this point I will venture to read to your Lordships an extract from what is generally allowed to be the organ of the Irish landlords. *The Dublin Express* of April 8 describes this Bill in the following terms:—

> "This portion of the Bill invites, we might almost say, the whole of the peasantry of Ireland to become bankrupt—to have their debts wiped away, arrears of rent included. To meet the inrush of candidate bankrupts coming by tens of thousands, and in the meantime declining to pay any rent, hastily improvised tribunals must be set on foot, with directions to finish off as many cases per diem as they can. This is inevitable; there will be no thorough sifting inquiry into each man's case. The crush of business will break down every safeguard, exactly as it broke down every safeguard when the Arrears Act was in operation."

And here I beg leave to remark to your Lordships that I was in Ireland during the operation of the Arrears Act, and I do not admit that there was any such break-down as is described by *The Dublin Express.* The article there goes on as follows:—

> "The peasantry, *en masse*, will go into bankruptcy and prove well enough that they are *boná fide* bankrupts. In fact, to this bankrupt business there is no bottom at all. It seems a sort of bottomless gulf, into which all Irish interests are to be hurled pell-mell."

Many persons will, no doubt, get reductions of rent because of bankruptcy; but I want to know how long those reductions will be continued? As far as I understand, it will only last so long as, in the opinion of the County Court Judge, the poverty of the land remains. After that, apparently, the Irish tenants will fall back upon their original rents, unless, indeed, they repeat the operation, and hereafter hold their farms on a tenure of bankruptcy renewable for ever. I have hitherto dealt only with tenants in reference to the matter of bankruptcy; but what, may I ask, will be the effect on the landlords? In other cases of bankruptcy, the connection between creditor and debtor is at an end on the payment of a composition; but, so far as I can understand, the Irish landlord will be bound hand and foot to his debtor for as long as the Judge thinks that the farm can be worked profitably for the creditors; and not only that—he will not receive the rent due to him, which will be kept for the benefit of the creditors other than the landlord. That is perfectly unfair. I now come to the County Court Judges. The duties which they will have to perform will be extremely difficult. They will have to administer estates, and often hundreds of acres of bog-land will come under the management of the Judge and his officers. That seems to me to be a matter which no County Court Judge in Ireland would be able to grapple with. There is also another matter of moment which seems to show that the measure will in some way prove a snare. A landlord in Ireland may proceed to get rid of a tenant in various ways. He may proceed by ejectment, and in that event the tenant can bring himself under the operation of this clause. The landlord may also proceed to recover his debt like any ordinary creditor; he can go to the superior Court, and the superior Court will issue judgment. When the *fi. fa.* has been issued, the sheriff, armed with it, can proceed to seize and sell the property of the tenant. If a tenant wishes to buy the property in, and bids a sufficient sum to pay off the debt and costs, then the Sheriff hands the land back. But if, on the other hand, he does not do so, the landlord can buy it, and then the tenant becomes a mere trespasser if he remains. In that way the landlords would be enabled entirely to evade this Act. My Lords, I have dealt with the tenants who are in difficulties, who, from non-payment of rent, are liable to ejectment. I have shown how disastrous and inapplicable these clauses are to them and to their landlords. But I have even a stronger objection. These clauses exclude wholly that class of honest and industrious tenants who are struggling with an excessive rent. This is the class which deserves most consideration. The noble Marquess at the head of the Government himself pointed out that if it were shown that judicial rents had been fixed at too high a figure they would have to be dealt with by purchase. The Commission has declared that judicial rents are too high, and proposes a plan for dealing with them. This large class is wholly forgotten in this Bill, unless, indeed, they go under the yoke of bankruptcy by not paying a year's rent. Can anything be more absurd or more unjust? You will say that you cannot break the 15 year lease, but you do break the leases of 150,000 leaseholders. You repeat the error made by us in 1881. We put the leaseholders at a disadvantage in comparison with the tenants at a judicial rent. You now reverse the process, and put the tenants under judicial rents in an unfair position in comparison with leaseholders. I trust that your Lordships will seriously consider, before this Bill leaves your House, the objections which I have mentioned; and I sincerely trust that you will be able to amend it in such a way that those acts of injustice which we know now arise from time to time may be avoided. There is one other matter on which I would say a few words. It has been already referred to in "another place," but the answer on that occasion was so unsatisfactory that I repeat the question. I wish to know from Her Majesty's Government whether they consider that this Bill is of vital importance, and whether they mean to stand or fall by it? If they do not stand or fall by this Bill, then the policy which they have put before the country is simply one of repressive criminal legislation.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON: My Lords, I hope that it may be possible to consider a measure of this nature with that calm and quiet consideration which it is the practice of this House to employ in such cases, contrasting, perhaps, favourably with the case of other kinds of legislation. The noble Earl spoke at considerable length upon many parts of this Bill; I am, for physical reasons, unable to-night to do anything more than deal briefly with its general outlines; but I am anxious in a few words to place before your Lordships the reasons that will induce me to give a cordial support to this Bill; and, at the same time, to point out to Her Majesty's Government one or two matters which I think deserve their careful consideration. I was prevented from being present in the House while my noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal made what I judge, from the report of it, to have been an admirably lucid statement of the objects of this measure; but I observe that he divided his observations into two parts. In the first he dealt with the case of leaseholders, and evictions, and appeals;

and, secondly, with the question of the equitable jurisdiction in bankruptcy. I would say a few words on each of these points. As regards the first of these questions, I had myself, before I left Ireland, come to the clear conclusion that the change proposed in this Bill was one which was required by both justice and expediency. The noble Earl entered upon a defence of the Land Act of 1881. I disapproved that measure at the time and I disapprove it now, and when I look back it seems to me to have been the fountain head from which a great deal of the misfortune and trouble in Ireland has arisen. But once that Land Act of 1881 became law, I cannot see that there was either logic or fairness in continuing to exclude men from its benefits who were entitled to quite as much consideration as those who benefited from it. On the contrary, I came to the conclusion that there were many cases of hardship in connection with the question of leaseholders, and I desired to see the change effected which this Bill proposes. The noble Earl opposite dwelt with terms of approval upon the proposal for a quinquennial revision, made in the Report of the Commission of my noble Friend opposite. I quite admit that there is a great deal to be said in favour of such a periodical revision, and the method by which my noble Friend proposed to obtain that revision was ingenious and—to use the word in no evilse nse—plausible. But, at the same time, there was one grave objection—namely, that every five years, and even before those five years came to an expiry, you will have a disturbance of everybody's mind with regard to this matter, and I can conceive nothing more unfortunate than that there should be anything of this nature. If there is one thing more important in Ireland than another, it is to give that unhappy country rest; and I honestly say that—within certain limits—almost any legislation would have been better for Ireland in times past than the system of perpetually passing legislation and then tearing it up, and allowing no man to believe that there is ever to be any finality or any rest. I now pass to the question of evictions. There is, no doubt, a very considerable change contemplated in this measure. It introduces a considerable breach in the ordinary law as between landlord and tenant, and the only ground on which I can agree to it personally is that the circumstances in Ireland are absolutely unprecedented, and that there are certain cases which the ordinary law does not meet. If I thought that by agreeing to this clause I was laying down a precedent for action elsewhere, I should have much doubt about doing so. Now I come to the question of the equitable jurisdiction in bankruptcy, and I am free to express the hope that my noble Friends below me will take it into their calm and full consideration whether these clauses can be allowed to stand in their present form. I am sure that they have been influenced by the best intentions, and a desire to meet a most exceptional and most trying state of circumstances, and a desire, above all, to deal gently and tenderly with the tenants of Ireland. But I think that they must be themselves aware that the proposal, in its present form at all events, has not been received favourably either by their friends or by their opponents. I listened to the speech of the noble Earl, and though I think there may be a little that is over-coloured in that statement, at the same time in the substance of it there is a good deal with which it is impossible not to agree. Such clauses as those contained in this Bill for equitable jurisdiction in bankruptcy are an inducement to tenants who pay under £50 of rent to declare themselves insolvent. Further, you have imposed upon your County Courts an almost impossible task, unless, indeed, you mean to create an enormous staff, and thus make what would be a judicial revolution. Nor must you omit to bear in mind how very open would be the door to fraud, and how difficult it would be to prove that fraud. I think that in the interest of the Irish landlords, who may be very heavy sufferers by any mistake in this vital matter, these clauses should be carefully considered. I noted with extreme satisfaction in the speech of my noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal his promise of a further instalment of land purchase. I am satisfied with this—that the settlement of the Land Question lies—and this is not too strong an expression—at the root of all the Irish grievances. When I was in Ireland I consulted confidentially a large number of those whose opinions I thought were most deserving of attention, and whose names, if I gave them, would carry the greatest weight in this House. There was a singular agreement among them, to the extent, I should say, of 19 out of 20, that the settlement of the Land Question really lay at the root of the Irish difficulty. I do not say that the settlement of the Land Question is the only cure. The evils which we find in Ireland are too complicated and of too ancient a date to be cured by any one specific; but the difficulties of religion, terrorism, crime, all are overspread by this one question of land. I believe that Her Majesty's Government are trying to the best of their power to hold an even balance between the landlord and the tenant in this very difficult matter—on the one hand to temper evictions, and on the other hand to secure the landlord in his just rights. So long as property and land continues eviction must be the last resort of the landlord. I shall not refer to the burning question upon which the noble Earl opposite has touched—namely, the enforcement of the law. We shall have before very long an opportunity, in one shape or another, of discussing that matter. I will not now anticipate that discussion, except to say that remedial legislation is not applicable unless the law is upheld. Remedial legislation cannot have fair play if the minds of men are set on fire by personalities and invectives, misrepresentations and calumnies. Remedial legislation at the present moment has a hard task before it. Doctrines are now propounded that criminal outrage can be justified in view of the acquisition of Constitutional or moral rights. I read of nightly scenes whereby Parliamentary institutions are degraded; I read with astonishment of appeals made from Parliament to mass meetings, and to what I may almost call mob law. I will not pursue this subject further, but will merely say that these are unfavourable conditions for remedial legislation. I trust, however, that the Government will not, on that account, refrain from persisting with their remedial legislation. I heartily welcome the promise of the comprehensive legislation which my noble Friend has given the House, and I gladly accept this Bill as an instalment.

Lord FITZGERALD said, he had observed that both the noble Earls (Earl Spencer and the Earl of Carnarvon) who had spoken had devoted considerable attention to the provisions of the 1st clause; and the general acquiescence of their Lordships—as they had both been Lord Lieutenants of Ireland—in the principle of that clause must insure the second reading of the Bill. He desired to point out that the 1st clause of the Bill was so framed as to do what he scarcely thought was the intention of its promoters. He referred to the provisions dealing with leases, and the inclusion of leaseholders in its operation, to which there would be very grave objections. Their Lordships might recollect that the Act of 1881 was mainly confined to tenants from year to year; but it contained a Proviso that tenants who held under leases which terminated within 60 years after the passing of the Act should, upon the termination of their leases, become present tenants, with all the rights which the Act conferred upon tenants from year to year. When the Bill reached this House the Marquess of Lansdowne moved the omission of the Proviso, and, being supported by the noble Marquess at present the Leader of the House (the Marquess of Salisbury), the Proviso was struck out, on a Division, by 142 to 59. How it was restored he (Lord Fitzgerald) could not say, but it was probably in the compromises which followed between the two Houses. The Proviso, however, appeared to have been re-inserted. He did object to the Bill on the ground that it broke leases, *nolens volens*, whether the tenant desired it or not, and without any action on the part of the tenant. No matter what length of time the lease might be for, it would be broken by the 1st clause of this Bill and converted at once into a yearly tenancy. He thought that would be a very great danger, and he wished to draw strongly the attention of the noble Earl in charge of the Bill (Earl Cadogan) to it. The provision of the 1st clause of this Bill sets forth that, on the passing of this Act, the lessee of any holding who, at the expiration of any lease existing at the passing of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, would be deemed to be a tenant of a present ordinary tenancy from year to year within the meaning of the said Act, at the rent and subject to the conditions of the lease shall, at the date of the passing of this Act, if *boná fide* in occupation of his holding, be deemed to be a tenant of a present tenancy, in like manner and subject to like conditions as if his lease expired at the passing of this Act; and his holding shall be subject to all the conditions of the Act of 1881 with regard to present tenancies as if the tenancy therein were a tenancy from year to year. Now, these provisions would apply to every leaseholder on the passing of this Act. The Bill showed a laudable desire to confer the benefits of the Act of 1881 on leaseholders, and that he appreciated; but they must take care how that was done. The change contemplated by the Bill was a very great one, and the full responsibility for it must rest upon the Government. With their Lordships' permission he would call attention to some of the provisions of the measure, in the hope that it would be amended in Committee. Now, he had said that the immediate effect of the Bill would be to turn all leaseholders coming within its provisions into tenants from year to year, but the true course would be to enable them to come into the Court to secure a fair rent without in any other respect altering the leases. In all other respects they would continue in occupation, subject to the other covenants of the lease. He submitted to their Lordships that the immediate effect of the clause would be to create alarm in the minds of the tenants, especially in the North of Ireland, when it was seen that any action on the part of the tenant puts an end to his lease, and converts him into a tenant from year to year. The tenants in the North of Ireland were hard-working, industrious, and steady men; and if this provision bore hard upon them it would create great disquiet and discontent. They were also men of independent views, and they would regard this provision in the Bill with alarm. He thought, indeed, that many of them would not accept the benefit proposed if coupled with the destruction of the lease. As to the Bankruptcy Clauses of the measure, he hoped to induce the Government to abandon them altogether. He believed—after a most careful consideration of these clauses—that they were demoralizing in their tendency and would be so in their effect, and they would also prove to be unworkable in practice and most expensive. If these clauses were to be retained in the Bill, he believed, in the case of the smaller holdings, it would be impracticable for any landlord in Ireland to enforce the payment of his rent from an unwilling tenant. Not only that, but a strain would be put upon the County Courts which they would be unable to bear, for the Bill proposed to make every County Court Judge a Bankruptcy Judge; and in Ireland the Bankruptcy Law, he could assure the House, was extremely complicated. There would be so many applications to the County Court Judges that they would not be able to deal with them, and the Courts would be blocked. The County Court Judges laboured under great difficulties in dealing with their work at the present time. The Judge had also a large equity jurisdiction, which embarrassed him very much at present; and if these Courts were created perpetual Bankruptcy Courts they would be overwhelmed. A very experienced Judge had said that he alone would have 4,000 bankruptcy cases in a year. These Bankruptcy Laws, which were to be transferred to the County Court Judges, gave them jurisdiction in every case of a tenant whose rent was not more than £50 a-year. The Bill would also deal harshly with the tenants in some ways. If a tenant was in arrears he might pay to his landlord one day a year's rent, and on the following day a petition might be presented to make him a bankrupt. In such a case the Judge had no discretion, and had to take the usual course. He also objected to cast on the County Court Judges full and plenary jurisdiction in administering a difficult and complicated set of laws. There was certain to crowd around these Bankruptcy Courts a set of legal practitioners who would use every means in their power to make the process expensive for both landlord and tenant, and that would lead to great evils. He also objected to the system of dealing with the creditors. Under the system proposed by the Bill, the primary creditors—such as those who had lent money to the tenant—got nothing, and thus the credit of the tenant was destroyed. When a tenant should have been brought by the landlord into the County Court, and should have been adjudicated a bankrupt, his farm would not be sold, but would be managed under the supervision of the authorities of the Court. To this the creditors of the tenant would very naturally object, and those who had lent him any money would also object. Besides, this was not a temporary measure, but was to last for ever, so that the County Court Judge would be perpetually involved in this bankruptcy business. He gave the Government credit for wishing to benefit the tenant in this Bill; but he did not think they were taking the right course in some respects. He had no desire to criticize the measure, but rather to point out in what way it might be amended. He wished to support the second reading of the Bill, because he believed it would be a benefit to the tenants of Ireland. He had no wish in this matter but to benefit the Irish people. There were many other objections to this measure as prepared, but they would rather be for the Committee than on second reading.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND (Lord ASHBOURNE): My Lords, there have been many great efforts to deal with this great question in many great Bills. In 1870 a very important measure was introduced, and it was considered by its authors—I am sure honestly—to be a just and a final measure. But in 1881 another measure was introduced, which, it was thought, would be more just and more final; yet that Bill is the direct cause of the introduction of the present measure. The Act of 1881 involved the question of dual ownership in Ireland, and that has thrown the whole question of land in Ireland into endless and hopeless confusion. A wise and sound measure of purchase must be looked to for a real solution of the present difficulties. Such a Bill necessarily takes time to introduce and get into working order, and thus it was essential to act at once; and, therefore, this Bill has been introduced into this House and is now before your Lordships for acceptance, for examination, and for criticism. It was introduced, my Lords, with no extravagant expectation that it will please everybody and do everything; but I may say that it was introduced with the earnest hope that it will meet the exigencies of the position, and that it will be found to apply adequate remedies where hardships and abuses are found to exist. The landlords of Ireland have not yet taken part in this discussion; but still, from my experience and knowledge of Ireland, I know that necessarily they cannot view with favour many of the provisions of the Bill, although, probably, there are clauses in which they acquiesce and which they consider necessary. The time has gone by when anyone would introduce an Irish Land Bill with the expression of extreme hope. My Lords, the way in which this Bill has been received is noteworthy; but, after all, it is very much what might have been expected. I should like to know what conceivable Land Bill that could be promoted by any statesman, I care not whom, would be received by the Irish Party? If the genius that is now arrayed upon their side applied itself once more to the production of the most just settlement of the Irish Question, do any of your Lordships think that it would be received and accepted as final by that Party? My Lords, the discussion to-night has been extremely interesting, and worthy of the closest and most attentive consideration. Many of the criticisms made were on clauses and details which it would be more desirable to deal with in Committee. I assume those criticisms will find their places on the Amendment Paper in Committee, when every particular criticism can be more easily and satisfactorily dealt with. My Lords, there are some points that cannot be regarded as matters of mere detail which I should like to note. The question of leases has been naturally very fully referred to. I do not myself know what is the exact number of those leases; but it is very considerable, and has been said to amount to 150,000. Those leaseholders are a very deserving class of tenants, and the change which the Bill proposes to make in their position—the gravity and importance of which I do not for a moment deny—was brought before us in the unanimous Report of the Royal Commission, and it is supported by a vast mass of public opinion. As to the phraseology of the clause, I admit, as everyone must admit, that the matter is beset with some complications, and may require examination in Committee. By

Clause 21 of the Land Act one of the most important covenants in the leases was broken, and it was a mere question of time how soon the question would have to be more fully dealt with. At the same time, I must say that it is not correct to say that all clauses in leases are intended to be broken by the operation of the clause in the Bill dealing with leases. Another observation was made with reference to town parks. There was no criticism on that subject, the noble Earl opposite expressing himself satisfied at the way in which the Government were going to deal with the question. I do not propose to weary your Lordships by going in detail into the Bill. There are 33 clauses, many of which are so obviously remedial clauses that they may be passed with general consent. I propose to deal with a few of the more important matters which have been brought forward. The remission of rates is, no doubt, a difficult question, that must be looked at from several points of view; but unquestionably it is an evil for which it is necessary to find a remedy. As an example of the evil, I may point out that in Connaught the tenancies of some of the great properties are very small, and that landlords are in the position of being unable to collect their rents, whilst liable for all the rates. The Guardians will not give credit to landlords for the rates; but obtain judgments and present petitions for the sale of their properties. It is very hard that a landlord who is unable to get a farthing rent from the tenants of these small holdings should be compelled to pay the rates of them. This is certainly a matter to be discussed and examined with a view to the discovery of a satisfactory remedy. As to the recommendations of the Cowper Commission for a revision of rents. Her Majesty's Government have considered with every respect the views of the majority of the Commission, though it is obvious that in appointing a Commission the Government did not bind themselves to accept every recommendation made by the majority of its Members, independently altogether of their own views on a full and fair examination of the evidence. Mr. Justice O'Hagan and Mr. Commissioner Litton, two of the greatest authorities, were, however, opposed to the suggestion of the majority of the Commission, and gave very weighty and powerful reasons against the proposal to reduce the term of revision from 15 to five years. We have been told that rents should be automatically regulated in relation to prices; but I should like to ask what prices? I am told that it might take two years to get anything like an authoritative and satisfactory statement of prices that could be appealed to in each locality for an automatic revision, even were such a revision considered desirable as a matter of policy. Mr. Justice O'Hagan and Mr. Litton pointed out that the people would never regard anything as final when judicial rents, fixed by the authority of Parliament, were to be unsettled and disturbed every five years in the way suggested by the majority of the Commission. The Government are of opinion that the provisions of the Bill will make things better for the tenant, and are sound provisions to work; but when the Bill is in Committee there may be useful criticisms of the details. I believe that it will be found that the Bill puts a serious and substantial check on evictions; it deals with arrears, and gives power in certain cases and at certain times to refix rents. No doubt, my Lords, these are great powers, and well worthy of your Lordships' attention. With regard to the proposal of the Bill to enable the landlord to give the tenant notice, so that the six months' period of redemption might run without an actual eviction, I believe it will be of the greatest value. I am of opinion that this clause will largely check evictions. Under the present condition of things a landlord cannot be finally assured of possession until that period has run, and one of the great grievances of Irish landholders was the uncertainty of this period. In order to begin this period at all the landlord must evict, though in the majority of cases tenants are returned as caretakers. But what is done by this clause? It dispenses with the necessity of going down and evicting the tenant, a process which is apt to produce bitter feelings of exasperation; and it allows six months to run from the notice, during which the parties may have a fair chance of coming to terms together, and without an eviction the tenant is made caretaker. That, I think, is a sound intention, and one calculated to check evictions and to bring about a settlement which will prevent some of those scenes from occurring which have not been satisfactory from the point of view of law and order, and have caused great trouble and expense to the Executive. There is another clause which has not been discussed by anyone to-night, which will also have a great and beneficial effect in checking evictions, and that is the 21st clause, which is the first of the Equity Clauses. This clause is free from some of the criticisms which we have heard to-night. It is not a Bankruptcy Clause; it is a clause which gives the widest possible discretion to the tribunal which has to deal with ejectment for rent, and allows it to grant a stay of execution for a reasonable time and on fair terms whenever it thinks that justice and fair play require it; and the Court is also allowed to order that arrears are to be paid by reasonable instalments. It is a fair and equitable clause, conceived in the most reasonable spirit, and one which can obviously be worked without the inconveniences which have been pointed out, and is free from the objections which have been taken to the Bankruptcy Clauses. I do not contend that the Bankruptcy Clauses have been received with widespread enthusiasm; I know that they have been assailed on the part of the tenants, and that they do not seem popular with landlords; but I can only say that the Government will give careful attention to all the suggestions and criticisms which may be made with regard to them. But I should like now to present the question from a point of view which may, perhaps, be narrower and humbler than any which has as yet been presented to your Lordships. One of the great grievances among the poorer tenantry in Ireland is this—and it is not a question only of recent years—that a load of debt presses them down. Debts, not to landlords only, but to shopkeepers, money-lenders, loan funds, banks, and sometimes to the gombeen man, hopelessly keep them down, and the greatest possible boon to the Irish tenantry and small farmers would be some cheap and expeditious local system of bankruptcy. That is a matter which, of course, the Government have had in view. It is desirable that, if possible, the tenantry of Ireland should be given a fair start from their incubus of debt, and allowed a chance of fighting out the battle of life, under freer and better conditions. Those who claim to speak for the tenants have received these provisions in a very critical spirit. They say that they do not like bankruptcy at all, and have an excessive dislike of the summary process of bankruptcy procedure, because it is a summary and resolute method which does not stand anything in the way of evasion or deception. As to the landlords, I do not think that they have as yet shown any marked desire to have these clauses carried into effect, as far as I can understand from the Press and in other ways, on the ground that it may lead to litigation, expense, and delay. But it appears to me that in the views which are thus taken it seems to be assumed that everything bad that is conceivably possible will happen at the same time and on the same occasion. That, in my opinion, is not the way to look at legislation of this kind. I read in *The Times* of this morning a very interesting speech delivered by Mr. John Morley, in which he seems to speak of these clauses in a very disparaging way, and talks of annual bankruptcies, while the landlord is to be deprived of his accruing rent. This is not the case, as it is the first charge after the tenant is allowed to remain in possession. This system, like any other, may be abused; but if the Bankruptcy Court frees the tenant from debt, it must naturally claim great power over him. All powers of bankruptcy are conferred on the County Court Judges, with certain additional powers, which will be found in Clause 23, and they will be exercised under prescribed rules, and with judicial discretion. It is contemplated that these rules will be carefully framed, with a view to avoiding dilatoriness and litigation, and of reducing costs to the lowest possible figure. We have had a sketch of a rather startling character of the procedure under these clauses, and if it was at all likely to happen, we should have a very troublesome time in Committee. I believe that arrangements in bankruptcy do not run for an indefinite period, but for a period ranging from 12 to to 15 or 18 months.

The 23rd section, which gives a wider discretion to the County Court Judges than is usually possessed in bankruptcy, must have presumed that it would be administered by them as trained Judges. However, every one of these possibilities will be examined by the Government, and will be discussed in Committee. What the Government have in view, and desire, is some method by which the Courts will be armed with ample power to deal with hard cases, and to check harsh evictions, and the more speedily and cheaply this can be done the better pleased will the Government be. When Amendments are put on the Paper, we shall be glad to examine and consider them with attention; and I trust that the result will be that the Bill will leave your Lordships' House what the Government desire it to be and have framed it to be—a measure which will be practical, remedial, and just.

Viscount MIDLETON said, he could not agree with the noble Earl (Earl Spencer) as to the effect of that most unfortunate measure the Land Act of 1881, which, in his opinion, proceeded on entirely false lines, unsettling everything and settling nothing. With regard to the earlier clauses of the present Bill and the question of admitting leaseholders, he had no objections to the Bill. He also approved the provision which made the time for redeeming run from the date of the decree. If a decree was given for possession, and if the tenant did not redeem within the period of six months, the Sheriff ought then to place the landlord in possession, and it should not be left to him to take possession by his own servants. A great deal had been said against landlords exacting "impossible" rents. This was an expression rather racy of the soil, for how anyone could exact what was impossible passed his comprehension. Landlords, as a rule, were not, he believed, at all prone to exact exorbitant rents from their tenants, and they, on their part, had good cause for complaint against the Inland Revenue, who charged the landlords Income Tax on the valuation of the holding, which in many cases was considerably above the "fair rent" which the landlord received. The Bill contained two entirely novel legal principles—first, that in considering what was a fair rent the Courts should have regard not to the value of the land, but to what might be described as the value of the man—what he could pay. The County Court Judge was to decide whether the tenant became bankrupt through default of his own. Supposing a man had 13 children on a holding that would only support three, was that to be regarded as his own default? Supposing his wife was a drunkard, or that he commenced to farm without having any capital land which required capital? Were these matters for which he was to be responsible? These questions would be constantly cropping up, and they would be left to the decision of a County Court Judge, who, in many cases, would have had no previous experience of land at all and knew nothing of the tenant. He hoped that these provisions would be carefully considered by their Lordships. The second novel principle which the Bill contained was that a tenant who became bankrupt was to be allowed to retain his assets—namely, his tenancy. He did not desire to speak harshly of Irish tenants, many—perhaps most—of whom, if left alone, would do their best to meet their liabilities. But they were easily led by bad advisers. They saw looming a large land purchase scheme, and, indeed, there was no other means than such a scheme of bringing peace to the country. Of course, the tenants' desire was to bring the price down to the lowest possible figure. But this meant absolute ruin to many a landowner, and it was only reasonable that men in this position should understand exactly where they were and what was the nature of the measure, as they had their mortgages and other charges to meet out of the rent, and there would probably, in many instances, be nothing left. One of the most serious defects in the Bill was its tendency to encourage litigation, over which the lawyers were already jubilant. There was no reason why the tenants on an estate should not purchase as a body and not as individuals. While, therefore, supporting the second reading of the Bill, he reserved liberty to oppose certain clauses; and he particularly objected to Clause 23, which gave a minimum amount of relief to the tenants with a maximum of inconvenience to the landlords. He was entitled to speak, not only for himself, but for others on the other side of the Channel, when he said that something on the lines of Mr. Parnell's Bill of last Session, suspending eviction on payment of a certain percentage of the rent, would be more preferable to the machinery of the Bill. But, as he had already said, a large measure of purchase was the only possible solution; and he should like the measure to be compulsory, with every reasonable advantage secured to the tenant. The land was now becoming a *damnosa hereditas*, and no other escape was possible out of the present deadlock.

Lord CASTLETOWN said, he was glad that a large and industrious body like the Irish leaseholders were about to be admitted to the important provisions of the Land Act of 1881. He also felt sanguine that the new Purchase Clauses would, in many respects, effect the good they were intended to do, and facilitate the working of a valuable measure. They required amendment, however. As to the clauses relating to "equitable jurisdiction" and bankruptcy, they introduced a new feature and principle into commercial and agricultural life which ought to be scrutinized with the greatest care. It seemed to him that if some of the clauses of this Bill were to pass into law as they stood, it would be quite justifiable to introduce a Bill for the purpose of making their application possible with regard to town holdings held at a yearly rent of £50 or more. The average Irish landlord was now only a ground-rent landlord. He had none of the privileges of the position of an owner of house property. He could not raise the rent at the expiration of a lease without the permission of a Court. He could not assume possession of the improvements of the tenant without compensation, and his power of re-entry in case of non-payment was very slow, tedious and expensive. It was now proposed to debar him from recovering his land out of which the ground-rent was paid, and to place him on an equal footing with an ordinary creditor. Why should not this law, if just to the Irish landlords, be applied for the benefit of English bankrupts? The tenants of town holdings were a more numerous class than the Irish tenants, and according to the figures of Mr. Lee Knowles, quoted in *The Times* on April 16, they suffered greater hardship; and cases of eviction among them were, *pro ratâ*, more numerous. He feared that in the congested districts the Bankruptcy Clauses of the Bill might lead to perennial bankruptcy and extravagant usury. There was no doubt that if Clauses 22 and 23 were to pass unchanged, many improvident and fraudulent bankrupts would be supported for a time by the "gombeen" men; and though the landowner might be ruined during the transaction no class would be benefited except the village usurers. If these sections of the Bill were remoulded, the circumstances of the occupiers in the contented districts might be alleviated, though he feared that it would be at the expense of the shopkeepers, small traders, and landowners of the district. But if the clauses to which he referred were not altered, what would be their effect on the ordinary tenants holding under £50? Of these men holding under £50 there were about in number 208,250. He excluded all holdings up to and at £4. Of this 208,250, in all probability every man made his rent out of the land. How would these people be treated by the Bill? Their financial credit would be destroyed the day that Bill became law. Many of these men were well off. Their position was sound, and that position the Bill would endanger in order to keep one or more fraudulent bankrupts in their holdings. Suppose one of those £50 men was made bankrupt; the unfortunate shopkeeper who had given credit, and the landlord who had given time, would be heavily mulcted, and the tenant, who would, perhaps, have paid honestly in the long run, would find bankruptcy a useful game, and become a confirmed swindler. This would be the case of a man who began bankruptcy as an honest man. He would agree to anything that would make the rare case of an unjust eviction an impossibility; but he could see no advantage in inflicting injustice on all the creditors of an improvident farmer simply because he was or had been a spendthrift. That section must be amended in such a way that the honest but unfortunate farmers would be protected, while the reckless and fraudulent were made to incur the penalty which was the fate of all classes under such circumstances. It was possible that, once law and order were restored in Ireland, these clauses, even when amended, might prove useless. He believed free sale of the goodwill was the real preventitive of eviction, and it would then have fair play. At present the National League almost entirely prevented it, and would prevent any remedial measures to be utilized. He knew of many cases of that interference. He now came to the second question of vital importance in the Bill—that of fixing a fair rent. That question underlay the whole matter they were dealing with. How was the County Court Judge going to fix assets if he did not know what the income was or had been? Take the case of a judicial rent. After all the trouble and expense, there was not one record to help the County Court Judges to arrive at an opinion as to assets, improvements, income, &c. Next came the question of the leaseholders, who were admitted to the benefits of the Act of 1881; but little or no provision was made to amend the obviously unequal administration and decisions of the fair-rent Courts. The manner in which fair rents were fixed was absurd. In the first place, the intentions of the Act of 1881 had not been carried out. The cost of each Sub-Commission was about £3,800. Then the cost of each case to a tenant was about £3, and to the landlord a little more. After all that cost there is not a vestige of a record, not even notes of what they have seen on the land they have run over. Surely some amendment was needed now that it was proposed to bring 160,000 leaseholders under the Act, and that many other tenants were going into Court. In thousands of cases appeals for a rehearing had been lodged. These appeals would never have been proceeded with had justice been meted out. This was proved by the fact that, out of 4,000 cases fixed by arbitrators, only six appeals had been proceeded with. He welcomed most portions of the Bill, though he considered it susceptible of great and useful amendment in many of its clauses. The Government had an immense opportunity now of making the Land Act of 1881 a workable measure and of use. But tinkering would not do. This Bill should facilitate those portions of that measure they proposed to introduce which dealt with land purchase. The abolition of dual ownership, fair rent, and fair sale questions were interwoven. The fair rent decisions must contain some *data* by which the two parties in the ownership might arrive at a conclusion. In this way men would begin to assent to terminating that partnership voluntarily. This could be done if they choose to do it. If not done, those portions of the Bill he had referred to would be nothing but shams, and of no value. It was, undoubtedly, the fact that in many parts of Ireland the people were getting tired of agitation, and were anxious to get from under the coercion of the National League; and it was also certain that, once the village tyrants—as a rule, reckless bankrupt men of no character—realized that their power to do evil and coerce was limited, and the law of the land was stronger than the law of the conspiracy, peace and prosperity would return. The present Government had the best means of solving the Irish Question. They had a strong majority, composed of Members of the two great English Parties, at their back. They had means of carrying through measures, not only calculated to prevent crime, but also of a remedial nature, with greater effect and facility than any other Government for many a long day. They had received a distinct mandate from the country to settle this Irish Question. If they faltered in their task, if they were led astray by partizan notions, or by ignorance, when they could be taught, the result would be disastrous to themselves and to the whole country, and especially to Ireland, whose social and commercial existence was at stake. On the other hand, he was convinced that the question could be solved now, and permanently, if it was dealt with bravely, vigorously, comprehensively, and without fear, favour, or affection.

THE EARL OF BELMORE said, he certainly did not intend to speak in any spirit of hostility, as he was of opinion that the Government was actuated by the best possible motives in bringing forward this Bill, with the hope that a better condition of things might be produced in Ireland. The question of Irish land was often discussed as a matter merely between landlord and tenant; but, in reality, the subject affected a great number of persons outside those classes. For example, the income from the Irish Church estates had suffered very severely already from the state of things in Ireland. The Representative Church Body had some

£3,500,000 of trust money invested in Irish mortgages, of which the interest amounted to about £1,500 a-year, the accumulated arrears of which, owing to the present state of things, was now no less than £57,000; and, if matters went on in the same way, the income of the clergymen depending on the Fund could not fail to be injuriously affected. They would be reduced to a state of semi-starvation, and would be unable to educate their children. In dealing with the Bill before the House, he said about 110,000 leaseholders would now be brought under the operation of this Bill. A strong point was made by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Fitzgerald) that many of the persons who would be brought under the operation of the Bill would not want it at all. Whether that was so or not, there could be no doubt that many leaseholders would be greatly injured by it. As a landlord, he might be told that it was better for him to say nothing on that subject. He wished, however, to be perfectly fair; and the tenants had plenty of friends "elsewhere" who would call attention to the matter if it were passed over here. He would, however, call the attention of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack to the provision that a leaseholder was not to be liable to become a present tenant under the Act if a valuable consideration had been paid for the lease. He presumed that that was intended to apply only to the case of a fine paid to the original lessor by the original lessee, and not to a subsequent sale of the tenant right? [The LORD CHANCELLOR intimated assent.] If so, it would be better to say so in terms. With regard to the question of town parks, he had stated on the occasion of the first reading, that the Bill seemed to leave the law as it was before; and he was still of the same opinion. He did not see that the Bill did much more than give a definition of what a town park was; it did not really alter the law with regard to them. He approved of the suggestions made by the noble and learned Lord in the direction of amending the Bill. He also approved of the clauses dealing with ejectments and evictions. There might be some harsh evictions. A farmer might, not merely from the fact of prices, but from other causes, be unable to pay his rent, and so be evicted; but he thought most landlords would hesitate to take that step in such cases. Indeed, in many cases compromises had been effected when the tenants saw that their landlords did not wish to take them into Court. He further hoped the Government would consider the question of re-imposing the duty of carrying out evictions on the Sheriffs. He approved of the proposed alteration by which a tenant would remain in as a caretaker during the six months which the law allowed him wherein to redeem, instead of, as at present, evicting him at once. From his own experience as trustee of a public estate in Ireland—that of the Raphoe Royal School—he was of opinion that that provision would be a beneficial one. On that estate, the tenants refused to pay, not because they could not, for they had money in their pockets, probably; and these provisions would deal with such cases. He, therefore, attached much importance to the clauses. With regard to the Bankruptcy Clauses, while admitting that something should be done to prevent harsh evictions, he thought that tenants would prefer to throw themselves on the generosity of their landlords, rather than appeal to the Bankruptcy Court. As to the question of the Appeal Court, it was necessary that something should be done. Cases for hearing had so largely accumulated that a long time elapsed before they could be disposed of. In his own experience, it had taken three years to have an appeal case decided. Meanwhile, prices had fallen, and the rent had to be fixed on a lower basis, increasing the chance of the loser having to pay the costs. He approved of the recent appointment of Mr. Wrench as one of Head Land Commissioners. He knew him well; he was an experienced and competent Englishman. He would not occupy their Lordships' time further; but—particularly by calling the attention of his noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor of Ireland—who had come in whilst he was speaking—to the question of the fines paid by leaseholders—would express a hope that a more distinct definition of some of the points in the Bill would be made in the Committee stage.

VISCOUNT DE VESCI said, he would congratulate the Government on having introduced a Bill dealing with the land question of Ireland, and hoped that it would be proceeded with *pari passu* with the sister measure in the other House for amending the Irish Criminal Law. He regarded it as the precursor of a much larger measure of land reform, which would deal with and utterly extinguish the intolerable anomaly of dual ownership of land in Ireland. He thought the country was deeply indebted to the members of the Royal Commission, who had, at great sacrifice of time and personal convenience, visited Ireland to inquire into the Irish Land Question on the spot. He, however, regretted that one member of that Commission had thought fit to present a Report different from the Report of the other members, for that gentleman was a very fair representative of the substantial North of Ireland farmers. Without desiring to offer this Bill any factious opposition, he thought it necessary to point out that several provisions of the Bill would, if not amended in Committee, work great injustice both to landlords and tenants. The disease from which Ireland was suffering was undoubtedly serious; but he denied that it was so desperate as it was sometimes painted, or that desperate remedies were required; and he had good hopes of great benefits flowing from the land legislation of the Government.

THE EARL OF KILMOREY said, he would be the last man to desire to embarrass the Government; but there were clauses in the Bill which made it quite impossible for any Member of the House as deeply interested as he was in the Irish Question to permit the second reading to pass without uttering a strong protest. Personally, he was one of the fortunate landlords who had no rents in arrear; but that was no reason why he should not stand by his fellow-landlords in the universal shipwreck which threatened them. If English, Scotch, and Welsh landowners should continue to admit the principle that the value of the landed property of an Irishman was no longer what it would fetch in the open market, but what a confiscatory Court of Commissioners assumed a lazy or improvident tenant was able or willing to pay for the privilege of "squatting" on land which did not belong to him, the day would come when the saying, "what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," would be forcibly applied to themselves. It should not, however, be assumed that the opposition to this Bill was confined to landlords, or that he opposed it on their behalf only. As he was informed, the Bill had no friends, at least, in Ireland. The general opinion was that the Bill, besides suspending and eventually wiping off, not only all arrears now due to the landlords, but all that which would become due between this and the date of the settlement of the composition alluded to in the Bankruptcy Clauses, would destroy all credit, paralyze all trade, and rapidly establish universal bankruptcy. If the landlords hated it much, the shopkeepers hated it more, and the "gombeen" man more still. The Government asked them to accept this Bill merely as an instalment of further remedial measures, which were to culminate at some not far distant date in the introduction of a grand scheme of purchase, which was to put an end to the dual ownership and all its concomitant difficulties, and finally settle the great grievance of the Irish people. He could not refrain from remarking that, in his opinion, the passing of this Bill would render unnecessary a second and more popular instalment of remedial measures. Why should the tenant buy at any price, however low, the holding that he could continue to occupy under the benevolent provisions of this Bill without paying any rent at all? For unless certain clauses were amended that would certainly be the result. He could not support the Motion of the noble and learned Lord. By the courtesy of the Prime Minister ample time would be afforded them for the consideration of Amendments; and he would, therefore, offer no opposition to the second reading. All he would do that night was to protest against the introduction of the Bill at all. He objected, to begin with, to the clauses which affected leasehold property and town parks. Previous Bills were bad enough, but this was worse. Previous Bills introduced by Liberal statesmen contained certain exemptions. This Bill removed them. It was left to a Conservative Government to introduce another instalment of remedial legislation more confiscatory than its predecessors. He looked upon this as the refinement of political cruelty; and, as a Conservative of 20 years' standing, who had seen a deal of Irish land law reforms, he felt constrained to address to the Prime Minister the memorable words of the stricken Cæsar—*Et tu, Brute!* The position of the Irish landlords in that House afforded a painful illustration of the unusual hardships, commented upon on a former occasion by a noble Friend of his (Lord Brabourne) — namely, that of the eels being asked to skin themselves. It was time, no doubt, that the eels got used to the skinning, but they could not be expected to enjoy the process. A noble Lord in "another place," not long ago, prominently connected with the present Government (Lord Randolph Churchill), was heard to say — "You have got the Crimes Act—what more do you want?" And then he added with great lack of feeling, "You must make up your minds to leave some more of your clothes behind you." Let them picture to themselves the melancholy effect of this gradual removal of their garments by Irish landlords. What was an average Irish landlord to do whose income was solely dependent on his rents if this Bill passed? How was he to pay, first, the heavy family charges on his estate; secondly, the interest on mortgage money; and, thirdly, maintain his family. If this Bill passed as it now stood three-fourths of the Irish landlords would become hopelessly and irrevocably insolvent. Bad as their case had been and still was, the passing of this Bill would aggravate their misery and intensify their distress. The action of the Bankruptcy Clauses would be that the landlord must lose one year's rent, because the tenant must owe that before the landlord could proceed against him. Then ensued the unlimited period during which the tenant's Petition to be adjudicated a bogus bankrupt under Clause 23 was under consideration. County Courts were few and far between, and did not sit daily, and the number of applications would be as the sands of the seashore. Rest assured the landlord would receive no rent in the meanwhile. The plan of his noble Friend was 20 times more injurious than any Plan of Campaign. But if Her Majesty's Ministers would consent to tone it down, they would find the band of resolute opponents to the Bill gratefully doing their utmost under those trying circumstances to assist, not to retard, the passing of what appeared to be one of the most important measures of this surprising and turbulent Session. He was sure they were all equally determined to prevent the repetition of those deplorable scenes which, alas, too frequently, characterized an Irish eviction, and which excited so much sympathy antagonistic to the administration of the law and to the legal vindication of the rights of property. At the same time, he failed to see how, since the passing of the Act of 1881, any eviction for the non-payment of rent could be fairly said to be harsh and unreasonable. At all events, under this Bill, as amended, they would have the satisfaction of knowing that never again would there be such a thing, if indeed there ever was, a case of an unjust and unreasonable eviction. He objected to granting power to a County Court Judge to tamper with the decision of the Land Commission and stultify its judgment by a readjustment, however temporary, of a judicial rent. Power to do this was given by the 23rd clause, and he trusted this would not be enforced. Let him have a power to stay evictions by all means. Let him have power to deal with rent, arrears, and liabilities due up to the passing of this Bill or the date of a tenant's application to the Court, but no further. He prayed his noble Friend to purge the Bankruptcy Clauses of their novel and eccentric peculiarities or expunge them *in toto*, and re-introduce the unobjectionable portions of them in some other place—say, at the foot of Clause 21. If his noble Friend could see his way to assent to certain Amendments in Committee his noble Friend might count on the speedy equipment of the new ship just launched upon the troubled waters of the ocean of politics. And when it left Lake Superior, and was piloted and manned in "another place" by a crew and master no less hard-working and efficient than its present "company," he wished it all the success it deserved; and when laid up in ordinary as an obsolete hulk, its batteries no longer needed, might it always be said of the old ship that she held water, and might she always rank with credit among the Parliamentary achievements of the Lord Privy Seal.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN: Nearly every noble Lord who has spoken objects to every part of the Bill from opposite reasons and motives. Approving of the Bill, I wish to save myself from being supposed to approve of legislation of this kind. I do not approve of interference with the Law of Contract, and with the right of men to agree between themselves on business matters. There are peculiarities in different people and congregations of people, but there are certain great lines of policy common to all people; and if it be unwholesome to interfere with liberty of contract in Great Britain, it is equally unwholesome to do so in the sister island. The noble Earl opposite (Earl Spencer) said the advantage of doing it in Ireland had been shown by the fact that rents had been reduced; but if a Court had been set up in 1881 for Great Britain, I fancy it would have been found that rents had been largely reduced in Great Britain also. I believe the Bill is absolutely necessary in the present condition of Ireland. I can fancy some of your Lordships absolutely denying the conclusions arrived at by the Commission presided over by the noble Earl (Earl Cowper); and I can understand this Bill being objected to by those of your Lordships who absolutely ignore the evidence taken before that Commission, and the conclusions arrived at by the Commissioners. But if your Lordships accept the Report as being in the main correctly drawn from the evidence, I do not understand what logical objection can be taken to this Bill. The portions of the Bill which appear to be most objected to are the clauses with regard to bankruptcy. I will not attempt to go into detail upon them; but I would remind the noble Earl opposite—a late Viceroy of Ireland—that a great deal of the expense now incurred arises from proceedings being taken at a distance, and that undoubtedly the expense will be greatly lessened by the fact that proceedings can be taken in the County Courts. There seems to be a general impression that the tenants will flock into the Courts and declare themselves bankrupt. I have not the slightest fear of any result of that kind. I imagine that if there is one thing the Irish tenant dislikes more than another, it is to be made bankrupt. I have no doubt insolvent tenants will avail themselves of the clauses, and I should think it is an excellent thing that they should do so; but I do not believe any large number of solvent tenants will avail themselves of these clauses to make themselves bankrupt. To believe the contrary, we must suppose that the County Court Judges will be either indisposed or unable to do their duty. After all, it is not so very easy for a man to be a fraudulent bankrupt—it is not so very simple a thing to maintain before a Court of Law that he has no property and no assets; and owing to the way in which the powers of the Court are safeguarded in the Bill, and owing to my strong belief that solvent tenants will not be anxious to be made bankrupt, thereby losing their credit with the country, I have very little fear that these clauses will be used for a bad purpose. However, there seems to be a general idea in the House that the Government will abandon that part of the Bill. I do not know if that idea is well-founded or not; but I wish to point out that if it be well-founded, there would have to be some other clause in the direction of allowing County Court Judges to make a reduction of rent for a reasonable time. The 21st clause itself is admirable and equitable, and no valid objection has been made to it. That clause provides that the County Court may stay evictions; but more than that will be necessary. It will be absolutely necessary, in order that the main purpose of the Bill be carried out, that a County Court Judge or other officer should have power to reduce the rent to what he thinks a reasonable amount for a reasonable time. I think the course taken in the Bill is the best way in which it can be done, and that a man should make himself bankrupt before he can get his rent reduced. It will not be sufficient unless that is done. Then the provision as to caretakers is an enormous benefit, and the contention that it will do much to reduce the number of evictions is, I think, a correct contention. The noble Earl (Earl Spencer) thought it would only postpone evictions; but I think it would have quite the opposite effect. As the matter stands now, a landlord is obliged to evict on the granting of a decree, and is obliged to evict again to get rid of the caretaker; but by this Bill the first and most painful eviction will be done away with altogether. It may be that it would be advisable for the power to be exercised by the Sheriff instead of by the landlord. The general effect of the Bill will, I believe, be excellent; and I would wish to point out to those of your Lordships who object to the Bankruptcy Clauses and other portions of the Bill, that this Bill is an alternative: I assume that the evidence given before the Commission is valuable, and that it is necessary for any Government, with the Report of the Commission before it, to legislate on the subject. I must point out that the only alternative to a Bill of this nature is what was suggested by the Report of the Commission—that rents should be readjusted every five years. That, I think, would be intolerable; it would keep the country in an everlasting state of turmoil, and there would be no rest or peace. The only other alternative to the Bill would have been the exercise of what I may call an illegitimate dispensing power on the part of the Executive, which I hold would be absolutely destructive of all possibility of maintaining law and order in Ireland under any circumstances. The only alternative to these courses is what this Bill does—to increase the dispensing power which already exists in the hands of the County Court Judges. On the whole, I believe the Bill would do no more than what any reasonable landlord would do of his own accord, except this, that a large measure of responsibility will be taken from the shoulders of the landlords and placed upon the shoulders of the County Court Judges. I am certain in my own mind that the effect of the Bill will be to largely diminish the number of evictions, and thus to act beneficially. I am sure that the tenants will not avail themselves unjustly or improperly of the provisions of the Bill, and that its general effect will be to the advantage of landlord and tenant, and consequently to that of the whole country.

THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: This Bill has been brought in by Her Majesty's Government for the purpose of affording some further relief to Irish tenants, in consequence of the great fall in prices that has taken place during the last few years. It is, I think, much to be regretted that Her Majesty's Government did not know last autumn the real state of things in Ireland with respect to the fall in prices, and take measures for the remedy of that state of things at an earlier period, for, if they had done so, much that has happened would have been prevented, and many circumstances which we all regret, and which have occurred since, would have been averted, and the country would have been placed in a much more satisfactory position than that it now occupies. There has been displayed in the course of this debate great unanimity with regard to the necessity of some legislation of a remedial character, but it is remarkable that an almost equal unanimity, with the exception of the noble Earl who has just sat down, has been shown on the part of everyone, but the occupants of the Treasury Bench, in considering the measure proposed by the Government for dealing with this question, as in regard to some of its principal provisions, altogether unsatisfactory. This somewhat confusing position is due partly to the fact that we have now only a portion of the plan of Her Majesty's Government now before us. Had they put forward their promised measure with regard to land purchase in Ireland, it might have been possible that the scheme of Her Majesty's Government with regard to bankruptcy might have seemed less objectionable. The circumstances being such as I have described them, I venture to think that we are entitled to hear from Her Majesty's Government before this debate closes an explanation of the main object which they have in view. I think that your Lordships are entitled to a clear and definite statement as to the course that will be pursued. We have a right to know from Her Majesty's Government whether the whole of this Bill is open to consideration, or whether Her Majesty's Government intend to leave the House to deal with all the details as they think fit; or whether there are in the Bill matters of principle by which the Government intend firmly to stand. It is admitted on all sides that the measure of relief now dealt out to the leaseholders in Ireland is urgently needed. As to whether the Bill would decrease the number of evictions there are grave differences of opinion. In the formal sense it is true that under these provisions only one eviction would be necessary, instead of two as at present. But would there be any reduction of the number of persons ultimately evicted? Upon that point there are differences of opinion. Many persons believe that under the new Bill ejectment notices would be taken out in greater numbers.

There would probably be for six months no actual forcible evictions, and for that the Government would be able to take credit. But what would result at the end of six months even as regards the leaseholders? I do not think that the recommendation made by the Commission intended that the whole body of them should be turned at a stroke of the pen into the condition of tenants from year to year. The noble Lord (Lord Denman) who has just sat down said, that solvent and industrious tenants in Ireland would not avail themselves of the bankruptcy clauses. What does that mean? It means that the very men who called forth the interest of my noble Friend who presided over the Commission will get no benefit at all from it. I confess I cannot conceive any stronger condemnation of these clauses. To avail himself of them, a man has got to declare himself a bankrupt, or take steps which will entitle his landlord to have him declared a bankrupt. That is an extremely unpleasant position for any man to put himself into. If it is true that in consequence of the fall in prices many of the rents are rents which the tenants cannot legitimately afford to pay, you put them into the alternative of becoming bankrupt or deprive them of obtaining any relief whatever.

The Earl of MILLTOWN: May I ask the noble Marquess what portion of the Report makes any such statement as that which he has just made?

The Marquess of RIPON: The Report says—

> "Although it is most undesirable to disturb an arrangement which was understood to be a permanent settlement, we cannot put aside the pressing necessities of the Irish tillage farmers, many of whom have lost much of their means, and are besides much indebted to banks, local merchants, and other creditors. . . . . Should the future range of prices continue on the present low scale, it will become absolutely necessary that a revision be made on the rents fixed prior to the beginning of 1886."

I think that that thoroughly bears me out in the statement which I have just made. I say that these men will not be provided for under this Bill unless they put themselves into the condition of bankrupts.

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl Cadogan): The noble Marquess commenced his speech by saying that the course of this debate had been unprecedented, and he explained that observation by the statement that whereas considerable objections had been taken to various portions and clauses of the Bill now under the consideration of the House, yet my noble and learned Friend beside me (Lord Ashbourne) had stated that he would give his consideration to the various points to which allusion had been made. I think that if anything has been unprecedented in the proceedings of to-night it has been this statement of the noble Marquess himself, in which he told us that because the Government accepts criticism and declares its disposition to give a favourable consideration to Amendments proposed on both sides of the House, therefore, and thereby, they declared their willingness to abandon the Bill. I must say I have often heard from the promoters of a measure, both inside the House and outside of it, the sentiment "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill;" but I have never heard thick and thin opponents of a measure declare that they will be satisfied with nothing but the whole Bill. It is, I think, pretty well understood that on the debate upon the second reading of a Bill we should confine ourselves as much as possible to the main principles of the measure and avoid a discussion on its details. The noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Fitzgerald) said that his view of the situation was that it was the duty of Members of the House who differed from the Government to offer their suggestions, and to make their criticisms, and to leave it to the responsibility of the Government whether they will accept those criticisms. That statement embodies the course which the Government will adopt. It is hardly necessary to repeat what I said when I had the honour of bringing in this Bill as to the position in which Her Majesty's Government found themselves when they embarked in legislative proposals with regard to the land in Ireland. The noble Earl the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland alluded to the legislation of 1870 and of 1881, and told us that it was unavoidable and justifiable. On the other hand, my noble Friend (Lord Carnarvon), who had equal opportunities as the noble Earl opposite with regard to experience in Ireland, told us that the Act of 1881 was the fountain head of all the troubles with regard to land legislation in Ireland. In a similar manner the noble Earl opposite told us that it was necessary to adopt that portion of the Report of the Commission which recommended a revision of rents, whereas my noble Friend gave strong reasons against the adoption of any such course. With regard to the provisions of the Bill which proposes to admit leaseholders to the benefit of the Act of 1881, I understand that there is a practical unanimity on both sides of the House as to the desirability of such a course. I believe it is rendered necessary by the fact of their being omitted from the Act of 1881, and we are obliged to give to one class of tenants what the noble Earl opposite gave to another. The noble and learned Lord opposite made some suggestions as to the drafting of that clause. I hope that if I say we shall consider those suggestions the noble Earl opposite will not think I am giving up the Bill. With reference to ejectments, I wish to say, once for all, that it is the main object of Her Majesty's Government in bringing in this Bill that harsh evictions shall be put a stop to in Ireland. The term unjust evictions can perhaps hardly be accurately used with reference to what after all is a resort on the part of the landlord to a legally authorized and legally sanctioned operation; but, at the same time, there is no doubt that harsh evictions have caused scandal, both in this country and in Ireland, which no Government should refuse to take into consideration. Therefore, I am anxious that it should be clearly understood that the great object which we propose to ourselves is to minimize, if possible, these evictions. Now, there appears to me to be a considerable difference of opinion as to the steps we have taken, and especially with reference to the powers of ejectment. I myself, from all the information I have been able to acquire, see no reason to qualify the statement which I ventured to make on the first reading of this Bill, to the effect that we believe that this system of giving notice would operate largely in diminishing the number of evictions. But the operation of that clause should be considered also in connection with the equitable clauses of the Bill. We believe that those clauses will operate in the same direction, and it is with that view that we shall press them. With reference to the equitable jurisdiction of the Bill, there is one remark that I desire to make. It has been impossible for me not to notice that noble Lords on both sides of the House have referred to "the equitable jurisdiction" which this Bill establishes, and have treated it as if it were confined to proceedings in bankruptcy. This view of certain provisions of the Bill has also been expressed outside the House, notably by Mr. John Morley, of whom I wish to speak with the highest respect for the consistency of his views throughout in regard to Ireland. He stated that he believed that the remedial policy of the Government could be summarized into one sentence, "an Act of Bankruptcy." It is not my intention to deal on the present occasion with the different clauses of the Bill; but I beg to point out that the 21st clause, which gives the County Court Judge the equitable jurisdiction, has nothing to do with bankruptcy. All it empowers the County Court Judge to do is to stay evictions in certain cases where he considers that a tenant is unable to meet his liability. This being the case, I think it is not fair to say that the relief is given only through the means of bankruptcy. I also desire to make a remark following upon the observations which the noble Marquess opposite has made in reference to the position which the Government takes up in regard to this Bill. I cannot help referring to a question that was asked by Mr. Gladstone in "another place" not many days ago. He asked whether this measure was a reality or an "imposture," and when murmurs arose he altered the word to an "illusion." Now, I do not wish to anticipate any statement on the subject of the position of the Government in reference to this Bill which may be made by the noble Marquess the Prime Minister. But perhaps I may be permitted to say on my own account that if I believed that this Bill had been brought forward as an "imposture" or an "illusion," as Mr. Gladstone seems to suggest, I should certainly not have taken the part I have in regard to it. I may also be allowed to say on my own behalf that as I have undertaken the charge of this Bill it is my intention and anxious wish, so far as in me lies, to meet the views of noble

Lords on both sides of the House in modifying and strengthening it, so as to make it, as I believe is the object of noble Lords on both sides of the House, deal as satisfactorily and with as much finality as is possible with one of the most difficult problems that any Government can have to face.

On the Motion of the Duke of Argyll, further debate adjourned till *To-morrow.*

House adjourned at half past Ten o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 21st April, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Select Committee — *Report* — Endowed Schools Act, 1869, and Amending Acts [No. 13].

Ways and Means—*considered in Committee*—The Financial Statement.

Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2) [196].

Considered as amended — Metropolitan Open Spaces Acts Extension * [214].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SUTTON DISTRICT WATER BILL *(by Order).*

CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration read.

Mr. DODDS (Stockton): I have to move that the Consideration of this Bill be postponed until Thursday next.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Consideration of the Bill be deferred until Thursday next."—(*Mr. Dodds.*)

Mr. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): In regard to the postponement of the Consideration of this Bill, I wish to ask the hon. Member for Stockton whether it is definitely intended that the Bill shall be taken on Thursday next, or whether there is any prospect of a further postponement?

Mr. DODDS: I have no information that I can give to the hon. Member. I was simply requested to move the postponement of the Consideration of the Bill until Thursday next, but I have no further information on the subject.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Consideration, as amended, *deferred* till *Thursday* next.

QUESTIONS.

CRIMINAL LUNATIC ASYLUM, DUNDRUM—ALLEGED ASSAULT.

Mr. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention had been called to the case tried before the Recorder of Dublin, on the 13th instant, in which William Lamb, late a Head Constable in the Royal Irish Constabulary, sued Dr. Ashe, Resident Medical Superintendent of the Criminal Lunatic Asylum at Dundrum, to recover damages for an alleged assault committed while an inmate of the Asylum; whether, according to the evidence as reported in *The Freeman's Journal* of the 14th inst, Dr. Ashe stated,

> "On the occasion of the bath, Lamb was stripped, his feet tied, and he was plunged in the bath for 10 seconds, and then, after an interval, for 10 seconds more;"

whether it is a fact that Lamb was plunged under the water head downwards, and held there by the warders; whether this was done as a punishment for refusing to go to church; whether a similar case occurred at the Limerick Asylum in 1873, when a patient named Danford came to his death from submersion in the bath; whether, on that occasion, as stated at page 63 of the 23rd Report on Irish Asylums, the warder who administered the bath was tried for homicide; but, as eight months had elapsed, and no Coroner's inquest had taken place, a conviction could not be had; whether the Resident Medical Superintendent who ordered the bath was called on by the Lord Lieutenant to resign, and did so; and, if the facts are as stated, what course will be taken with regard to Dr. Ashe?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am informed that the facts are not as stated in the Question. The man's head was not held downwards in the bath, and the punishment was inflicted, not for refusing to go to church, but for creating disturbances in church. He brought an action for damages against the Resident Medical Superintendent of the Asylum; but it was dismissed, with costs against the plaintiff; and the Recorder, who tried the action, made some complimentary references to the manner in which the Asylum was conducted. The incident in the Limerick Asylum was altogether dissimilar. However, the question of punishing lunatics by plunging into cold water is under consideration.

MR. W. J. CORBET said, it was given in evidence that this man's head was held downwards under water for 10 seconds, and again for 10 seconds a second time.

COLONEL KING-HARMAN said, he understood the man's head was not held downwards; but he believed his head was held under water.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) (for Dr. KENNY) (Cork, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether, referring to the case of Lamb *v.* Ashe, recently tried before the Recorder of Dublin, the rules made by the Lord Lieutenant in Council for the "good conduct and management of District and Criminal Lunatic Asylums in Ireland," sanction the employment of the cold plunge bath as a means of punishment, as stated in the evidence given in above case; and, whether the employment of such punishment is a distinct violation of Rule xviii. of said Rules?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The punishment was sanctioned by the Privy Council; but the question is now under consideration.

AFRICA (WEST)—THE GAMBIA—THE ACTING CHIEF MAGISTRATE.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Acting Administrator of the Gambia has appointed Dr. F. H. Spilsbury, Colonial Surgeon, to be the Acting Chief Magistrate of that Settlement; whether that gentleman has had the legal training necessary to perform the duties of that office; whether, when he was invested with similar functions on a previous occasion, grave complaints were made by suitors and others; whether there is any officer of the Government who has been called to the Bar; and, if so, why he was not appointed; and, whether it is true that the Assistant Colonial Surgeon is about to leave for the Gold Coast; and, if so, who is to perform his duties in the absence of Dr. Spilsbury?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir HENRY HOLLAND) (Hampstead): Dr. Spilsbury was appointed acting Chief Magistrate; but the Administrator has since been directed to offer the post to Mr. Maxwell, the Queen's Advocate, whose office it has been found necessary, for reasons of economy, to abolish. It is not known that Dr. Spilsbury has had any regular legal training; but he has acted as Chief Magistrate to the satisfaction of the Government on previous occasions; and the Memorial which was sent in against his appointment, in September last, was not of such a character as to induce my Predecessor to alter the arrangement, which appeared to be the best possible under the circumstances of the Settlement. The selection of officers to fill acting appointments is necessarily left to the discretion of the Local Government, and in small Colonies like the Gambia the choice is very limited. I have no information of the reasons which induced the Acting Administrator to appoint Dr. Spilsbury instead of Mr. Maxwell. The Assistant Colonial Surgeon has been transferred to the service of the Gold Coast Colony; and the question of the best mode of providing for the medical requirements of the Gambia is under my consideration, and will be decided upon before any leave, if asked for, is granted to Dr. Spilsbury.

INDIA—EXPORT DUTIES ON RICE, &c.

MR. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the only Export Duty levied on Indian produce is a duty of three annas per maund levied on all rice exported from India, and which, at present prices, is equivalent to 12½ per centum *ad valorem* on Burmah rough rice; whether the repeal, in 1873, of the Export Duty on wheat was followed by a large and steady increase in the export of wheat; and, whether Her Majesty's Government contemplate the repeal of, or any reduction in, the Export Duty now levied on Indian rice?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): Yes; but according to a calculation made in the India Office, the rate is about 7 per cent, not 12½ per cent. The Secretary of State regrets that, for the present, the state of the Indian finances does not admit of a repeal of the Export Duty on rice.

POOR LAW (IRELAND) — DAVID BROOKS, MASTER OF THE ARMAGH WORKHOUSE.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If Mrs. Berry, and her illegitimate son, James Brooks, have been inmates of the Armagh Workhouse since the appointment of David Brooks to the office of Master of that workhouse on the 5th instant; if David Brooks be the same person who was decreed, at the Easter Quarter Sessions held at Armagh, for the seduction of this woman Berry or Vallely; and, if so, whether the appointment of David Brooks as Master of the Armagh Workhouse will be confirmed?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: Elizabeth Berry and her children were inmates of the Armagh Workhouse since the 5th instant; but they are not there at present. As regards the case of Brooks, the Local Government Board are in communication with the Board of Guardians on the subject.

FISHERY BOARD OF SCOTLAND—SALARIES OF OFFICERS.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick, &c.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been drawn to a Memorial, dated June, 1883, presented by the fishery officers of Scotland to the Fishery Board of Scotland, and to the reply of the Fishery Board to this Memorial, declining to recommend any improvement in the condition of the fishery officers, and also declining to allow any application to be made to the Secretary for Scotland; whether additional duties have since been imposed upon the fishery officers — namely, monthly Returns of all fish caught on the sea-board of Scotland, duties under the Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Amendment Act, 14th August, 1885, s. 7, and the administration of £20,000 for the benefit of crofter fishermen, thrown upon the Fishery Board by the Crofters' Bill; and, whether, in consideration of the facts, that no alteration in the remuneration of the fishery officers has been made since 1861 (except some minor alterations affecting some seven stations only in 1877), that the duties of the fishery officers since 1861 have greatly increased, that the cost of living has also largely increased, and that the increased duties of the fishery officers places a considerable surplus at the disposal of the National Exchequer annually, he is prepared to recommend that the position of the fishery officers of Scotland be investigated, with a view to an adequate increase of salary and allowances?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): My attention has been called to the Memorial referred to, and to the answer given by the Fishery Board to it. I am not, however, aware that the Board declined to allow any application to be made to the Secretary for Scotland; I believe they only said that they did not see their way to make any recommendation to the Secretary for Scotland. With reference to the additional duties imposed by the Sea Fisheries and Crofters Acts, in the Estimates for 1887-8 there is an extra Vote, for travelling and incidental expenses, of £255. An inquiry having recently been made into this matter, the Secretary for Scotland is not prepared to recommend any further investigation in the meantime; but should it be found, after experience of the working of these two Acts, that the additional duties imposed on the fishery officers are very heavy, the Secretary for Scotland will then be prepared to consider whether the matter should not again be brought before the Treasury for their Lordships' consideration.

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) — THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE— "OFFICIAL PAID" LETTERS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Postmaster General, If large quantities of letters recently sent through the post, containing matter relating to the Imperial Institute, are stamped with the words "official paid;" whether ordinary prepaid letters have merely the word "paid" so stamped; whether the words "official paid" always mean that money has been actually received by the Post Office for the postage of all the letters on which these words are stamped; if not, what is the exact ordinary meaning of the words "official paid," when used by the Post Office Department; and, whether such words have not, in some cases, been used to mark letters which have been sent through the post without any money payment?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I beg to state that the Imperial Institute pays for its postage; but that instead of paying letter by letter an account is kept, and rendered quarterly, of the postage on the whole correspondence emanating from the office of the Imperial Institute. This correspondence is marked "official paid," to indicate that no charge is to be collected on delivery. There are two stamps in use—one being the "official paid" stamp, and the other the "paid" stamp. The latter stamp is only used when a large number of letters or circulars are posted at one time, and the amount of postage is paid at the time of posting. In the result, it makes no difference to the Revenue which stamp is used.

MR. BRADLAUGH asked whether any quarterly account had yet been made up and paid?

MR. RAIKES said, he was not aware; but he would make inquiry if the hon. Gentleman gave Notice of a Question.

ARMY — "SPECIAL RESERVE" FOR QUARTERMASTERS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

CAPTAIN COTTON (Cheshire, Wirral) asked the Secretary of State for War, with reference to a statement made in the House on the 5th March, 1886, by the then Secretary of State for War, that there is a special reserve for Quartermasters of a proportion of the grant for distinguished or meritorious service, If he can now state to the House what is the amount reserved for the Quartermasters of the Royal Artillery, and for how many of these officers?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle: At the present time, 1-14th of the sum reserved for the Royal Artillery is assigned to officers of that corps commissioned from the ranks. I do not, however, feel satisfied that this is a satisfactory arrangement, and I will undertake to make an inquiry into the matter.

CHANNEL ISLANDS—MILITIA LAW OF JERSEY.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether his attention has been called to the arrest of William Burch, Patsy Breen, and William Naish, Militiamen on the Island of Jersey, and reported in *The Jersey Advertiser* for the 16th March, 1887; whether the law provides that judgment may be given by default; and, if so, whether such arrests were legal; whether information has reached him that strong opposition prevails amongst the working men upon the Island to compulsory military service, and that a great number of the inhabitants are fined and imprisoned for refusing to attend drill; and, whether he will consider the advisability of appointing a Civil Commissioner to inquire into the working of the Militia Law on the Island?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.) (who replied) said: No, Sir; I have no information as to the particular cases quoted, and cannot express an opinion as to the legality of the arrests. Under the Militia Law of 1881 persons who failed to attend when summoned are liable to a fine; and on the third default, if the fine is not paid, they may be imprisoned for four days. The law provides for exemption from drill in special cases. Although some complaints have been received at the Home Office, I have no reason to believe that the feeling against compulsory service is general in the Island; or that a great number of persons are fined or imprisoned for declining to serve. The present Militia Law was passed on the Report of a Committee sent by the War Office to the Channel Islands in 1879; and I do not think any further inquiry necessary.

WESTERN PACIFIC—REGULATIONS FOR THE LABOUR TRAFFIC.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether the Regulations under which the labour traffic in the Pacific is now carried on are to be found in any Papers already presented to Parliament; or, if not, whether he will present them; whether breaches of those Regulations by vessels belonging to the various Australian Colonies, and other offences committed by the crews of those vessels, when committed beyond the territorial limits of the Colony, are now exclusively triable by Her Majesty's High Commissioners for the Western Pacific, or are dealt with by the Colonial Judicatures; and, whether Her Majesty's Government have departed from the intention that offences committed by Natives against British subjects should always be dealt with by that Commission, and have approved a reversion to the system of dealing with them by act of war against tribes and peoples, as in some recent cases?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): Two Colonies employ Polynesian labourers—Fiji and Queensland. The Fiji Ordinances and Regulations were given to Parliament in 1878 (Parliamentary Paper, 111). Those relating to Queensland have not been given; but could be given if the hon. Member thinks it desirable to move for them. Speaking generally, Regulations made under Colonial Acts have no effect beyond Colonial waters, except as being conditions under which licenses are granted and enforceable by forfeiture of the licensee's bonds; but any acts amounting to criminal offences committed on the high seas, or elsewhere, within the jurisdiction of the Admiralty by the crews of vessels belonging to the various Australasian Colonies are, by the Act 12 & 13 *Vict*. c. 96, triable in the Courts of any British Colony, or in the High Commissioners' Court, and some cases have been dealt with in the Supreme Court of Queensland. There has been no departure from any intention such as that described in the Question. The hon. Member will find the object of the High Commission accurately described in extracts from a Memorandum written by Sir Arthur Gordon in 1881, which were given to Parliament in 1883, C 3,641 pp. 28 to 31. He will there see that the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner extends only to British subjects; and that the High Commissioner has no authority whatever to deal, whether judicially or in his executive capacity, with the offences of natives not under the dominion of the Crown; and that the Law Officers have invariably advised that insuperable obstacles exist to any assumption of jurisdiction by Her Majesty over other than British subjects.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—CHARTER TO THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government will submit to Parliament any Papers showing the circumstances under which the Government of the day were induced to grant a Territorial Charter to the Royal Niger Company, the extent of the territories and protectorates now claimed and possessed by that Company, the progress they have made in establishing government and jurisdiction, the fiscal system and commercial tariffs which they have established, their relations with neighbouring Native Powers, and the degree to which they have reconciled the sovereignty of a Trading Company with free trade or the contrary?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): The request of the hon. Member is reasonable. I will, as soon as possible, lay upon the Table Papers on the subject. I cannot pledge myself to all the details of the Question; but the House shall be fully informed.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY—TRANSFER OF SERGEANT MOLONEY TO MOUNT NORRIS.

Mr. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If the County Inspector of Constabulary, County Armagh, some two years ago held an investigation into certain charges preferred against Sergeant Moloney, now of Mount Norris; and, whether the County Inspector was so satisfied of the truth of the charges that he caused the transfer of Sergeant

Moloney to another station; and, if so, whether the Government will consider the advisability of having him removed from Mount Norris to some other station, having regard to former charges made against him there?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied), said: It is true that in March, 1885, an investigation was held at Mount Norris into charges made against Sergeant Moloney. The charges could not, however, be substantiated; but the Sergeant was removed from that station in the interests of the Service, but not as a punishment. I am informed that Sergeant Moloney has now been sent to Mount Norris simply to take temporary charge under unavoidable circumstances.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—RESIDENT MAGISTRATES.

MR. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether he can state the number of the counties in Ireland, "being in a state of disturbance," in which Resident Magistrates appointed under the 6 & 7 *Vict.* c. 13, s. 31, are now doing duty; the names of the counties for which Resident Magistrates have been appointed "owing to the absence or non-residence of a magistrate in the county;" and the number of counties in which Resident Magistrates are now residing "for any other sufficient cause;" and, whether he will mention what these "sufficient causes" are?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I can only say that, as Resident Magistrates at present serving in Ireland have been appointed by successive Goments since 1857, it would be extremely difficult to prepare the Return; and, as the Return would prove of no great practical utility, the Government will not undertake to give it.

SAVING LIFE AT SEA—NOMINATION OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, When the Select Committee on Saving Life at Sea, promised several weeks ago, will be nominated?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to the hon. and gallant Member, I have to say that the Committee will be nominated immediately.

INFIRMARIES (IRELAND)—WICKLOW COUNTY INFIRMARY.

MR. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is a fact that the Grand Jury of the County Wicklow reduced the amount passed at the Presentment Sessions for the maintenance of the Wicklow County Infirmary; whether he will inquire into the grounds for the reduction; and, whether it is a fact that the Board of Governors of the Infirmary recently refused to allow the Secretary of the Grand Jury to act as a member of the Board?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The relations between the Grand Jury and the Governors of the County Infirmary are matters in which the Government cannot interfere. I have, however, been informed that the facts as stated are substantially correct; but it is not proposed to make any further inquiry into the matter.

INDIA—THE UNCOVENANTED SERVICE.

MR. KING (Hull, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether a Despatch was received by the Secretary of State for India, in or about September last, on the subject of the grievances complained of by the Uncovenanted Service in India; and, whether it is true that the Government of India has made recommendations for changes in the condition of the Uncovenanted Service as to length of service for pensions, leave counting as service, a graduated scale of pensions, or any other matters; and, if so, whether he will lay the Despatch, and any Correspondence which has taken place on the subject, before the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The facts, as indicated in the Question, are correct; but as the Correspondence is not complete, no Papers can at present be laid on the Table.

EGYPT—THE SOUDAN—THE SUAKIN-BERBER RAILWAY.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War, What was the original cost of the material of the Suakin-Berber Railway; for what purpose was it subsequently employed, and where; and, where is it at the present moment?

The SURVEYOR GENERAL of the ORDNANCE (Mr. Northcote) (Exeter) (who replied) said: The original cost of the materials for the Suakin Railway was £345,000. Of the materials returned from Suakin, or not sent out, of which the aggregate cost was about £320,000, stores to the value of £30,000 had been issued for the use of various departments. The remaining plant had been stored at Woolwich, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, Lydd, and Strensall, with a view to its being employed at those stations in the construction of military railways as funds became available. One of those railways was under construction at Plymouth, and one at Chatham would be commenced this year. Steps were being taken to dispose of all surplus materials, and some part of them had been already sold.

BURMAH (UPPER)—THE RUBY MINES.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether he can now give the House any information as to the Ruby Mines in Burmah; whether any contract or arrangement has been made, or is in the course of being made, with any, and what, person or persons, and on what conditions; and, whether more than one person or firm has been permitted to inspect the mines, with the view to any contract?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): No further information has been received since the date of my last answer to the hon. Member on the 17th of February, and I am not aware that any contract has been, or is being, made. There is no objection to the inspection of the mines by any persons interested; but I believe that the representatives of no firm other than that of Messrs Streeter have visited the mines.

Mr. BRADLAUGH asked whether there was any truth in the statement published in the Press, that Messrs. Streeter had entered into such a contract?

Sir JOHN GORST said, he was not able to say. There were so many rumours and statements in newspapers that were found to be untrue that he should advise hon. Members to suspend their judgment for the present.

NAVY—CONVERSION OF THE ROYAL MARINE CORPS.

Sir SAMUEL WILSON (Portsmouth) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether his attention has been called to an article, which appeared in *The Times* of the 13th instant, explanatory of a scheme submitted by Colonel Crease, C.B., R.M.A., for the conversion of the whole Royal Marine Corps into Marine Artillery; whether this proposition of Colonel Crease's is being at present considered by the Board of Admiralty; and, whether he has any objection to lay Colonel Crease's complete scheme upon the Table of the House, so that Members may have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with a proposition which, while claiming to save some £18,000 a-year in the Naval Estimates, seems likely to prove advantageous to the Service and to the country?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): A scheme for the conversion of the whole Royal Marine Corps into Royal Marine Artillery has been forwarded by Colonel Crease, and is under examination by the Admiralty. I am informed that this examination has made clear that the scheme will not fulfil the promise of economy claimed for it. It is not usual, and would not in this case be advantageous to the Service, to officially publish an inchoate scheme of this kind.

MERCHANT SERVICE—WRECK OF THE CHANNEL STEAMER "VICTORIA"—THE D'AILLY LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether gas or electric light is the illuminant of D'Ailly lighthouse; whether the fog signal is sounded by gas, as in the Irish lighthouses of Howth Baily, Poolbeg, and Mew Island, and the Scotch lighthouses of Langness Point and Ailsa Craig, or steam; whether, if the former, it could have been sounded in one minute after the commencement of the fog, as compared with one hour required to get up steam for the latter; and, whether the facility with which gas-sounded fog signals can be put into immediate action is one of the advantages of the gas system of illuminating lighthouses?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Gas-sounded fog signals can, of course, be put into immediate action; but I would point out to the hon. Member that his Question relates to a lighthouse not under the control of the Board of Trade, but under that of the French Authorities, and that I cannot, therefore, give him any official answer. If, however, the hon. Member will call at the Board of Trade he is welcome to see any information which the Department possesses respecting this lighthouse.

INDIA—LEAVE OF ABSENCE—"URGENT PRIVATE AFFAIRS."

Mr. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether a military officer, whatever his rank, serving in India, can obtain leave of absence for three months on urgent private affairs; and, whether a member of the Executive Council of Bombay can obtain leave of absence on urgent private affairs for three months?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham) (who replied) said: Any military officer in India, except a Commander-in-Chief, can obtain, if the exigencies of the Service permit, three months' leave on urgent private affairs. A member of the Executive Council of Bombay cannot obtain such leave; but he can obtain six months' sick leave, if necessary.

LAW AND JUSTICE (IRELAND)—THE REVEREND MATHEW RYAN, C.C.

Mr. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether a communication inclosing a Resolution of sympathy and condolence with the Reverend Mathew Ryan, C.C., was forwarded by the Tipperary Board of Guardians to that reverend gentleman at Kilmainham Prison, where he is at present confined; whether said communication was withheld from Father Ryan by the prison authorities; whether, subsequently, Father Ryan having learned of such a Resolution, sent an acknowledgment thanking the Guardians in reply; and, whether this communication was also withheld by the prison officials, who refused to forward it; and, if so, will he state on what grounds or by what authority the prison officials acted in withholding these communications?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The communications referred to were detained under the Regulations governing the Correspondence of prisoners, who, though allowed full liberty to write or receive letters upon private matters, are not permitted to discuss questions of a public or Party character.

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)—ATTEMPTED MURDER OF MR. JEREMIAH HEGARTY, J.P.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If it is true that Mr. Jeremiah Hegarty, a magistrate, of Millstreet, Cork, was shot at and seriously wounded on Saturday, the 16th instant; if he will narrate the circumstances that preceded the attempted murder; and, if any person or persons have been apprehended for the crime? I also wish to know whether it is the fact, as stated in *The Times* of this morning, that Mr. Hegarty has written a letter in which he says—

> "I have no hesitation in attributing this outrage to the slanderous attacks made on me by *The Cork Herald* and by Dr. Tanner."

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Before that Question is answered, I wish to ask you, Sir, whether it is in Order for the hon. Member opposite to read from a newspaper, in the form of a Question, a quotation which every Member must see casts a grave reflection on a Member of this House? I ask, you, Sir, if it is in Order?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not seen the terms of the latter part of the Question, which is put by the hon. Member on his own responsibility. If it should prove to be in Order it ought to be put in the presence of the hon. Member for Mid Cork.

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: I am unable to answer the latter part of the Question, which is not on the Notice Paper. But, in reply to the part which appears on the Paper, I have to say that Mr. Hegarty was shot at and wounded as stated. He had proceeded to Cork by a morning train, and returned by the train reaching Millstreet at 8.35 p.m. His son and a servant were awaiting his arrival with his conveyance. On driving out through the gates leading to the road from the railway yard he was fired upon. No arrests have so far been made.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked, Whether it was true that a large number of policemen were on the road where Mr. Hegarty was shot?

Colonel KING-HARMAN said, he was not aware of that; but he was informed that a large number of suspicious persons were seen on the road.

ARMY (THE AUXILIARY FORCES)—VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY CORPS.

Mr. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked the Secretary of State for War, Whether any arrangements are being made for training, in the service of heavy guns, and the various and complicated stores and war material now in use, the Volunteer Artillery Corps situated at great distances from any suitable forts or fortresses; when are the field guns, promised to Artillery Volunteers, to be issued; and, how many are to be issued, and to what corps?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. E. Stanhope) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): All Volunteer Artillery situated within a reasonable distance of a port or fortress to be defended are assigned to those posts by the new mobilization scheme. After making every provision for this service there still remain a certain number of corps of Artillery Volunteers, who are mainly assigned to the defence of London. I am disposed to agree with the statement attributed to my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley) two days ago, that for this purpose guns of position would probably be the most useful arm with which to provide them. But I may say generally that I am in favour of arming each corps, so far as its peculiar circumstances and its resources will permit, with the arm best suited to the duties it will have to perform.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA—INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY CONVENTION.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the United States of America have yet acceded to the International Industrial Property Convention; and, what States are now parties to it?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir James Fergusson) (Manchester, N.E.): I am glad to be able to inform the House that the official notification of the accession of the United States of America to the International Industrial Property Convention was received yesterday from the President of the Swiss Confederation. The following States are now parties to the union:—Belgium, Brazil, Spain, France, Guatemala, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Servia, Switzerland, Great Britain, Sweden and Norway, Tunis, Dominican Republic, and United States.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether Germany has been invited to join the Convention?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Yes, Sir; but up to the present she has not replied.

INDIA (MADRAS)—THE COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE—LAND SPECULATIONS—CASE OF MR. SULLIVAN.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether Mr. Sullivan, late Senior Member of Council, Madras, was reported to the Government of Madras by Mr. Crole, then Collector of Madura, for owning an estate at Ootacamund and attempting to sell the same to a Native in the Madura District, in contravention of the Civil Service Covenant; whether Mr. Crole was suspended for one year by the Madras Government; whether the late and the present Secretary of

State found, on inquiry, that Mr. Sullivan was in truth dealing in land, and that Mr. Crole was justified in reporting him; whether it was in consequence of the contravention of the Civil Service Covenant that the Secretary of State agreed to accept Mr. Sullivan's resignation; and, is it the intention of the Government to allow Mr. Sullivan to retire on full pension?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): Without pledging myself as to the absolute accuracy of the phraseology of the hon. Member, I answer his Questions generally in the affirmative. I must, however, remind him that Mr. Sullivan, as a subscriber to the Madras Civil Fund, was entitled to an annuity out of this fund on his retirement.

CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE OF HER MAJESTY'S REIGN—SERVICE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether any Estimate has been made of the cost of the contemplated Jubilee Service in Westminster Abbey; and, if so, whether he will inform the House what that cost will be?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): Yes; an Estimate is in preparation; but it has not been definitely determined upon yet. It will be presented to the House in the course of a few days.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—EMIGRATION.

MR. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the large amount of interest taken in the question of Emigration, the Government will allow the Business on Tuesday, 26th April, to run its ordinary course, so that the discussion upon the Motion first upon the Paper may come on?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am sorry to say that it is not in my power to accede to the suggestion of my hon. Friend. It may be necessary for the House to proceed with the consideration of the Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill.

THE BUDGET—APPROPRIATION OF SURPLUS TO EDUCATION IN WALES.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, If, before the Chancellor of the Exchequer disposes of his surplus, the Government will make some provision for technical education, local Colleges, and Welsh intermediate education?

THE FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. SMITH) (Strand, Westminster): I am somewhat surprised at the Question. It is not usual to deal with Questions of this sort in the Budget speech. If it should appear to the Government to be necessary to make provision for those objects in which the right hon. Member and other Gentlemen take an interest Supplementary Estimates will be presented in the course of the Session on the subject.

WAR OFFICE—THE ORDNANCE COMMITTEE—DISCLOSURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS BY AN OFFICIAL.

SIR HENRY HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for War a Question of which I have given him private Notice—namely, Whether there is any truth in the statement which appears this morning in *The Standard* newspaper, that a grave breach of trust has been committed in the communication of official information to a Foreign Government by a subordinate official in the Office of the Ordnance Committee at Woolwich; and, if so, whether the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to give to the House any information which will re-assure it that effectual steps will be taken to prevent such breaches of trus in future?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir; it is a fact that a military clerk in the Office of the Ordnance Committee at Woolwich has been discharged from the Service for communicating information to persons outside the office, though not to a Foreign Government. This course has been taken, not so much on account of the importance of the information, but as a punishment for a grave breach of trust in divulging it. Every possible precaution will be taken to prevent such breaches of trust in the future.

PARLIAMENT—THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE, 1882—RULE 9 (ORDER IN DEBATE)—SUSPENSION OF A MEMBER.

Mr. SEXTON, Belfast, W.) : I wish, Sir, with your permission, to ask a Question on a matter arising out of the suspension of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy). On Friday last my hon. and learned Friend sought admission to this Chamber, and was informed that he could only be admitted to the Strangers' Gallery. I wish to ask whether a suspended Member, during the period of his suspension, is regarded as a stranger, and, if so, whether he is to be regarded as a distinguished stranger; and, whether, Sir, he is eligible for admission to any part of the Chamber usually reserved for persons who are not Members of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that when an hon. Member of this House is suspended from the service of the House, the doorkeepers, acting under general orders, exclude that Member from entering within the outer doors of this Chamber. As a matter of custom, it has been usual to allow the hon. Member so suspended to sit in the Strangers' Gallery. I can assure the hon. Gentleman there has been no distinction made between this case and other previous cases of suspended Members.

PARLIAMENT — RULES OF DEBATE—OFFENSIVE IMPUTATIONS ON MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE—MR. DILLON AND THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Mr. Speaker, I desire to say a word or two in the nature of a personal explanation, and if the House will allow me I shall only occupy its time for a few minutes. I regret very much to be compelled to refer to the matter; but a custom has arisen in this House of hurling the most odious and detestable personal charges at Members of this House in the course of debate, when it is perfectly impossible that they can reply to them. On Monday last the noble Marquess the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) stated in this House that two Gentlemen, who were well known and who acted for months under my direction, went over to Ireland counselling assassination; and when I directed his attention to the fact that these Gentlemen were responsible to me and acted under my instructions, he repeated the charge, emphasized it, and said that those charges were made in the period to which I refer. That is a charge of a most odious character. I sat, and I waited to hear him proceed further; because I understood that you, Mr. Speaker, had ruled what any Member is bound to do when he makes charges of a criminal character against another Member — namely, substantiate his charges. The noble Marquess proceeded in his speech without even answering my appeal, without giving references to time, dates, or authority, so that I might be able to convince him of his mistake. Not only did he not substantiate his charges, but he did not even make them definite. I hold that I am entitled to take this opportunity of stating that this statement—which was given greater currency to by the noble Marquess under the authority of his great name and position in the country is utterly and most absolutely false. There is not a shadow of foundation for it. I think I am entitled to ask that he shall furnish me with the particulars of dates and extracts from speeches and references to the circumstances to which he alluded, when I shall be able to show him that his statement is entirely without foundation.

[The Marquess of Hartington was not present, and there was no reply to the Question.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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WAYS AND MEANS—FINANCIAL STATEMENT—COMMITTEE.

Ways and Means—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): Mr. Courtney, I have now to ask the Committee to pass from the region of higher politics in which we have been engaged during the last two or three months into the calmer sphere of the discussion of the national balance-sheet. But although the discussion may be conducted, I hope, in a calmer atmosphere, it involves, as every Member of this House must be aware, questions reaching deep down into the foundations of the prosperity of the country, and consequently interesting to every member of the community. I have, in the first place, according to custom, to call the attention of the House to the Expenditure of the past year; but before I do so I should wish to impress one set of broad figures upon the minds of Members of the Committee, and that is that in the past year both theExpenditure and the Revenue may be said, in round numbers, to have reached the figure of £90,000,000. That £90,000,000 admits of easy sub-division, both on the Expenditure side and the Revenue side. On the Expenditure side it divides itself into two great heads—namely, £30,000,000 for the charges on the Consolidated Fund, and £60,000,000 for the Supply Services. That is to say, that one-third represents the Consolidated Fund charges and two-thirds represent the Supply Services. Of the £90,000,000, on the receipt side, £75,000,000, in round numbers, are derived from taxes, and £15,000,000 from non-tax revenue—in other words, five-sixths of the revenue is derived from taxation, and one-sixth is derived from other sources, such as the Post Office, telegraphs, and miscellaneous sources of that kind.

I now come to the Expenditure of the last year. The Budget Estimate, as hon. Members will see by reference to the Papers which are in their hands, was £89,610,000. The Supplementary Estimates amounted to £1,259,000, giving a total estimated Expenditure of £90,869,000. The actual Exchequer issues were £89,997,000, just £3,000 less than £90,000,000. The result is that the Exchequer issues were £387,000 more than the original Estimate and £872,000 less than the total estimated Expenditure, including Supplementary Estimates. Now, it is interesting to consider how far this reduction of £872,000 on the total Estimates was due to real economies in the Services, and represents so much saved to the nation. In the first place, there is on the Consolidated Fund charges a saving, in round figures, of £100,000, which is due to the fact that the interest on Treasury Bills and Exchequer Bills was estimated at a higher figure than ultimately had to be paid. The estimate taken was 3 per cent for all Bills. As a matter of fact, the average rate of 3 months' Bills was about 2¼ per cent; and that of 6 months' Bills about 2½ per cent. There is an apparent saving on the Army of £263,000; but that does not represent real economy. It is due to what is sometimes considered by hon. Gentlemen rather a complication—namely, the difference between the Exchequer issues and the actual Expenditure of a particular year. I think I can illustrate the nature of this apparent reduction to the Committee by the following illustration. Suppose that a man had an agent whose travelling expenses he had agreed to pay up to the sum of £1,000 a-year maximum; but that, at the same time, he had agreed only to pay the actual expenditure. Suppose that the agent expended only £900, there would be £100 left. The £100 would not be at the disposal of the agent, nor would he be entitled to spend it in that year; but it would go against his next year's allowance. So it is with the Army. It is impossible to foresee the exact amount of money that may be lawfully spent within the year, especially in respect of our troops abroad. An approximate sum is, therefore, issued, and the amount by which the actual expenditure falls short of that sum is carried over to the next year, and constitutes, as in the present case, a balance which will relieve the Exchequer issues of the following year. I have thought it best to make this explanation, as I believe the point is one which sometimes puzzles hon. Members. When they see an apparent saving of £260,000 in this particular Vote, they ought to know that it is really no saving in the sense that the Army has spent so much less money. The short issue in the year 1886-7 is mainly due to the fact that £260,000 had been issued under the Vote of Credit to the Army in the previous year, which was not spent, and which, therefore, came in relief of the Exchequer issues of the following year. The same applies, to a certain extent, to the saving of £347,000 shown on the Civil Service Estimates. But here, I am happy to say, the whole apparent reduction is not swallowed up by a matter of account. On the Civil Service Estimates there has been a real and substantial economy of about £200,000 by the Departments not having spent all the money which they were entitled to expend under the grants; and there is also in the Revenue Departments a real saving of about £100,000. If hon. Members will add together £100,000 saving on interest, £200,000 on the Civil Service Estimates, and £100,000 on the Revenue Departments, they will see that there is a real saving of about £400,000 on the past year. The other amounts which are short of the Estimate are due rather to matters of account. At all events, we arrive at this conclusion—that the total Expenditure contained in Exchequer issues was £872,000 less than the amount which was granted by Parliament.

Turning now to the Receipts, hon. Members will see that the Budget Estimate was £89,869,000, and the Exchequer Receipts were £90,773,000, showing a Revenue beyond what was anticipated of £904,000. It will be interesting, I presume, to the Committee to have some explanation with regard to the causes which have brought about that comparatively satisfactory result. It is due to an increase of £681,000 in the produce of taxes, and an increase of £223,000 in the produce of non-tax revenue. Looking at the figures under the several heads, hon. Members will see that there is an increase in the Customs of £455,000, and a decrease in the Excise of £444,000. These are, together with an increase of £465,000 in stamps, the most remarkable points about the Revenue of 1886-7.

I may now touch upon one or two details of importance. The revenue from alcoholic drinks is a matter which has always had great interest for the hon. Members of this House. In 1885-6 the actual revenue derived from alcoholic drinks was £26,898,000, and in the last financial year it was £26,690,000, a falling off of £208,000. Comparing the receipts under this head in the past year with the Estimate, I find that where we have gained is on foreign spirits, in which there has been an increase of £406,000, while in home-made spirits there has been a decrease of £548,000 below the Estimate. If you take the two together the Budget Estimate was remarkably accurate; but certain circumstances have disturbed what may be called the internal relation between different forms of alcoholic drink. While on this subject of spirits I wish to say that the most able officers of the Customs and the Inland Revenue are never able to say for a certainty whether the run will be on foreign spirits or on British spirits, nor are they able easily to forecast whether brandy, rum, Geneva, or any other kind of spirit will be a favourite in any particular year. I believe it depends to a considerable degree upon the climate, and I am told that the great increase in rum of £208,000 over the Estimate is due to the cold weather which we have had. Another explanation which is given is, that there has been a decline in the price of rum. When my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) framed his Estimates rum was dear; therefore it was thought recourse would rather be had to English spirits; but, in fact, rum has been cheap, and the consequence has been that the increase has been upon foreign spirits. Then, again, with regard to wine. The revenue from wine has been constantly declining, partly in consequence, as the Committee will be aware, of the change in the duty; but above that there has been a constant tendency to decrease in the consumption of wine. From 1877 to 1886 the revenue from wine has fallen off 30 per cent. This is a subject to which, with the permission of the Committee, I shall advert to in a later portion of my Statement.

Coming to articles of consumption other than alcoholic liquors, there is no increase in the revenue from coffee. It is a somewhat extraordinary fact, but the revenue from coffee never increases; the consumption of coffee and the revenue from coffee are less now than they were 20 years ago. On the other hand, the consumption of cocoa and the revenue from it have doubled within the last 15 years. The consumption of tea has doubled between the years 1857 and 1887. In 1857 the consumption was 2·45 lbs., and in 1884 it is 4·87 lbs. per head of the population. Looking at the position of our Indian Empire, we may congratulate ourselves upon the following facts with regard to the consumption of tea:—Whereas 10 years ago we received 156,000,000 lbs. from China, and 28,000,000 lbs. from India, or 184,000,000 lbs. altogether, in 1886 we received 145,000,000 lbs. from China, and 81,000,000 lbs. from India, or 226,000,000 lbs. altogether, the increase from India having thus been 53,000,000 lbs., whereas there was a decrease of 11,000,000 lbs. from China. It would be extremely satisfactory to the Chancellor of the Exchequer if great general advantages were always accompanied by fiscal advantages; but I am sorry to say that that is frequently not the case. In the same way that we rejoice over the progress of the temperance movement in spite of the loss to the revenue which it entails, so our satisfaction at the substitution of the tea of India, a part of our Empire, for that of China, a foreign country, is somewhat marred by the fact that it is accompanied by a loss of revenue. This is due to the curious circumstance that the teas of India are stronger than the teas of China, and, therefore, go further, so that a smaller quantity of tea is required to make the same number of cups. The consequence is that the consumption of tea, though progressing, does not show so great a rate of progress as it used to do.

I have now spoken of the revenue from alcoholic liquors and from other articles of consumption; the only remaining notable increase in revenue is due to the item of stamps, under which head we have exceeded the estimate by upwards of £450,000. This increase is about equally divided between the Death Duties and the Stamp Duties proper. The increase in the Death Duties is due to the falling in of some heavy legacies; but there is a further increase which is due not to expanding revenue, but to the collection of arrears. By the adoption of a better system of collection, Income Tax, and Death, and other Duties are collected much more closely than they used to be, and so you find that what you would at first believe to be an increase of revenue due to increasing wealth and prosperity represents little more than the increase of energy on the part of the officers of Somerset House. In the revenue from stamps proper there is, however, a more satisfactory cause for the increase—namely, that the receipts have been sensibly affected by an improvement in business. There have been more transactions which have required stamps, and particularly an exceptional number of foreign bonds to bearer which have been presented to be stamped.

These are, I think, the main incidents in the Revenue of last year with which I need trouble the Committee. I now come to the final result of the past year. It will be remembered that the surplus was estimated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby at £259,000 at the beginning of last year, and the Supplementary Estimates were £1,259,000. If you deduct that from the estimated surplus you have a deficiency of £1,000,000 on the Expenditure; but there were savings to the extent of £872,000, which reduced the deficiency to £128,000. The excess of the actual yield of revenue over the Estimate I have stated at £904,000, which converts the deficiency into a final surplus for the past year of £776,000, as against the anticipation of my right hon. Friend of £259,000. I think the Committee will admit that, on the whole, looking to the events of the year, that is a satisfactory result. This result is due in the very smallest measure to the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is due, in the first instance, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer who made the accurate provisions which have been so satisfactorily justified; and, in the second place, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—my noble Friend the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill)—who was responsible for the greater part of the financial year, and who has rendered such successful service to the cause of economy.

Now, I will state—and it is always a matter of interest to the Committee—how this affects our balances. We began the year with a balance of £5,626,000. We took out of balances, principally for advances to Local Authorities for local loans, £452,000, leaving a balance of £5,174,000; and, adding to that the surplus of £776,000, we have a balance—a very creditable balance I hope the Committee will think—at the end of the year of £5,950,000, which is an increase of £324,000 over the year before. We have paid off Debt during the year to the amount of £6,046,000; and if I add the amount by which the balances are increased, and which is equivalent to a diminution of Debt, the real reduction of Debt is £6,370,000.

But I hope the Committee will not run away with the idea that because in the last year there has been this satisfactory balance of £776,000, therefore we can look at the financial situation of the country with absolute complacency. I should wish, with the indulgence of the

Committee, to examine in some detail the position in which we stand as regards our resources and the calls made upon them. And, first of all, let me make some general observations on the Expenditure and Revenue for a certain period of years. With regard to the Army and Navy there has been considerable discussion, and I do not wish to dwell at length upon this point; but I would simply call the attention of the Committee to the fact that during the last two years, and during the present financial year which we have now commenced, we have had to bear a heavy extra charge. Let us hope it may be an extra charge and not a permanent charge. This extra charge is due to that which is commonly known as the naval scare of November, 1884, and if I call it a naval scare I do so without intending to imply either that it was justified or that it was not justified. I simply refer to it as a historical event. In that year the House agreed to an extra expenditure for the Navy of £3,100,000 on ships, and £1,600,000 on armaments. But I believe it is not infrequently the case that such Estimates expand during the course of their being worked out. In this case the Estimate for ships expanded to £3,600,000; and when the authorities of the time had to deal with the armaments, it was found that the Estimate had not included the necessary amount for new ammunition, and that involved a further sum of £500,000. We arrive, therefore, at this result—that, whereas the original Estimate was £4,700,000, the total extra expenditure is £5,700,000 in round numbers. The Admiralty have carried out the programme with considerable vigour and rapidity; and while it was the intention of Lord Northbrook that this additional sum should be divided between five years, the increased sum of £5,700,000 has been spread over and will be discharged in little more than three years. The Committee will see that this involves a heavy sacrifice on the part of the taxpayers during the last two years and this year. The increase due to that historical event on Navy Votes alone has been more than £1,000,000 a-year during the past two financial years, and involves £900,000 in the present financial year. Let hon. Members, therefore, keep in mind, when they are looking at the Estimates for the Navy, that those Estimates have been increased by that which has been a temporary, and, I hope, an exceptional outlay. The same will hold good for the armament of the Navy, which comes within the Army Estimates. The Army Estimates this year include no less a sum than £1,700,000 for naval armaments. But of this extra shipbuilding programme, there fortunately remains only £200,000 for completion in the next financial year. So that we may look forward, I trust, to the fact that at the end of this financial year we shall have arrived at a great diminution of the necessary charge which has been made upon the taxpayers owing to these exceptional circumstances; and I am glad to be able to state that the arrangements which are being made about our fast merchant steamships, adapting them at a very small cost to the State for naval purposes, and the arrangements which are also in progress with the Colonies, afford good reason to hope that the time is not far distant when the Naval Estimates will not require to be swollen by exceptional items such as those which have fallen so heavily upon the taxpayers during the past two years.

And now, Mr. Courtney, I pass away from the expenditure on the Army and Navy—in regard to which I hope and believe that it will be possible to make considerable reductions in the future—I pass from that point to the Civil Service Estimates, to which I should wish to be allowed to call the particular attention of Parliament, because here the intervention of Parliament is involved quite as much, and, I believe, more than the action of successive Governments. This year, notwithstanding the constant automatic increase in these Estimates, for education and other services, over which the Departments have no control at all, the amount asked for—namely, £17,931,000, is only £104,000 in excess of that expended in the year 1886-7. And here I wish to say that to a large extent the smallness of this increase in the prospective Estimates of this year is due to my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson), who has been through these Estimates with the greatest care, and who has subjected them to as rigid an examination as they have ever been subjected to before. Now, let us look back to the first year of the new system, established under the Exchequer and Audit Act. In the year 1868-9—that is to say, not 20 years ago—the Estimates for the Civil Service were £9,173,000. Now they are £17,931,000, or an increase of £8,758,000. You must deduct some items owing to changes of account; but there is a genuine increase remaining of £8,079,000, or 88 per cent. The first impression of the Committee may be—what extravagance has been committed by successive Governments in this respect; but I would call their most particular attention to the origin of that increase, and to the parties who are really responsible for it. It is not due to the fact that the business of the State has been conducted in a more costly manner, but that new functions are constantly being forced upon the State, and that new services are being demanded of it. The voice of Parliament, acting under the pressure of public opinion, has been constantly imposing new duties upon the State, and compelling it to bear, in whole or in part, the burden of work that has hitherto fallen on local authorities or private individuals, or that to a certain extent has not been performed at all. It is for Parliament in the future to decide to what extent it will continue that policy, but it is my duty, as the present guardian of the public purse, to call attention to the result of its legislation, so far as expenditure is concerned, and to show that that legislation—in many respects beneficent legislation as it may justly be called—has added 80 per cent in less than 20 years to the cost of the Civil Service.

It is a remarkable fact that out of the increase of £8,079,000 no less a sum than £7,605,000 is due to the direct action of Parliament, and only £474,000 is an administrative increase. If we deduct from the latter sum an increase of £629,000 in the cost of Irish Police, there is an absolute saving during the period of more than £150,000 on what may be called the cost proper of the Public Departments. That the cost of administration is not higher than it was formerly is proved by this fact—that in 21 Departments there has been a total increase of £172,000, while in 18 other Departments there has been a decrease of £200,000, the net decrease being £28,000. Therefore, the growth of these Estimates is not due to the administrative Services, and the saddle should be put upon the right horse. It is of no use denouncing the costly system of Government from year to year, and in Department after Department, when fresh duties are constantly being thrust upon the State, frequently in opposition to the views of the existing Government of the day. The question is one of such importance that I will not apologize to the Committee for the details into which I am about to enter. Of the increase I have mentioned there was due to new services imposed upon the Government by Parliament £5,057,000, and to the automatic increase in services previously imposed £2,548,000. Classified according to its nature, £4,153,000 of the increase was for Educational Services, and I would call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) to that fact. This includes not only education, but the surroundings of education, such as the Science and Art Department at Kensington. Then there has gone in relief of local taxation £2,548,000, and for Miscellaneous Services, consisting chiefly of new forms of State control, £612,000. Education includes primary education in Great Britain, Irish industrial schools, reformatories, Science and Art, Welsh Colleges, &c. Relief of local taxation includes police, pauper lunatics, roads, prisons, &c. Miscellaneous Services include mines and factory inspection, fishery inspection, Irish Land Commission, Crofters Commission, Wrecks Commission, registrars of friendly societies, registrars in bankruptcy, surveys of the United Kingdom, and a number of other items. I am not saying that every one of those Services is not a valuable service, but I am only reminding you that they are now performed by the State, while previously they were performed in a large measure by local bodies or private individuals, or were not performed at all, and that it is due to the action of Parliament that the State has now undertaken them. And even at the present moment, when our finances are not in that entirely satisfactory position which some people believe, there is not a single object in which hon. Members take an interest as to which they are not urging on the Chancellor of the Exchequer their claims for his support. Persons interested in Art want grants to be made to the National Gallery, or money to be given for the purchase of pictures or other objects which may be for sale in the market. One hon. Gentleman is pressing me to purchase a valuable collection of coins. My right hon. Friend (Mr. Mundella) is going to press me heavily for technical schools and University Colleges, and I am also pressed for Colonial defence and other matters. I hope I have succeeded in placing before the Committee the growing nature of the Civil Service expenditure quite apart from any questions about the Army and Navy, which are the Departments which generally occupy the attention of the House.

I think I have shown the Committee that the Expenditure of the country is—I may say at least—very elastic, that its growth is certainly large and automatic, and that, besides the automatic growth, there is an artificial growth fostered by the public generally. I wish I could turn from the Expenditure side, which I have characterized in these terms, to the Revenue side, and say that there, too, we have got the necessary elasticity which would enable us from year to year to meet easily the extra pressure and to make head against these increasing charges. But that, unhappily, is not so. On the side of Revenue I would wish to call the most serious attention of the Committee to some important facts. I have made a calculation with respect to the progress of the produce of the taxes under the main heads of Customs, Excise, Stamps, and House Duty. I will deal with Income Tax separately. That fluctuates to such an extent, according to the number of pennies imposed, that it is not a fit subject to be included in my present comparison. I have started with the produce of these taxes in 1859-60 and bring the calculation down to the past year, taking periods of five years up to 1884-5, and then taking 1885-6 and 1886-7 separately. I am going to state what the same taxes have yielded at different times in order to show whether there is that elasticity in the Revenue which we might have hoped for and to which we used to be accustomed. To make the comparison correct, the net taxes imposed in each period have been added, and the net taxes reduced have been deducted. In the first period of five years the produce of these taxes increased 10·8 per cent; in the next period of five years 9·9 per cent. Then we come to the flourishing period between 1870 and 1875, when the increase in the produce of the same taxes was 24·2 per cent. During the next period, from 1875 to 1880, there was no increase at all, but a decrease of 2·9; but in the next quinquennial period, from 1880 to 1885, there was an increase of 5·8 per cent. In 1885-6 there was a decrease of 3·7 per cent; while in the past year there was an increase of 0·8, or less than 1 per cent.

I do not know whether the Committee grasp at once the full significance of those figures. They show that in the earlier quinquennial periods the produce of the taxes was developing very much faster than the growth of the population, whereas during the latter periods the produce of the taxes was scarcely increasing at all. The calculation I have made does not take into account the increase of the population. If we look to the best of those periods, the period from 1870 to 1875, the increase was, as I have said, 24 per cent, while the population increased 5 per cent. Therefore, the rate of increase in the produce of the taxes was nearly five times as great as that of the population. But in the last year the increase was not quite in proportion to the increase in the population, and in the year before there was a large decrease as compared with the increase of population.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Alcohol will account for it.

MR. GOSCHEN: Well, alcohol will account for a good deal of it. That is a point to which I was about to call attention. But while we have lost a great deal on alcohol we have not gained sufficiently upon other articles to make up for the loss, partly because the other articles subject to taxation are now so few, and partly from other causes. I am not looking at it now from the point of view of the consuming power of the country, but simply from the fiscal point of view. I trust that the Committee follows me. Now, the amount of duty on alcoholic liquors was, in 1876, over £31,000,000; in 1886 it was under £27,000,000, a fall of more than £4,000,000, due in great part—I trust by far the greatest part—to the increase of temperance. Now, in former times, when there were a large number of articles subject to duty, it was generally expected that when there was a falling-off in one branch of Revenue the loss would be recouped under other heads. But now the articles on which duty is levied are so few that, when you lose this great revenue on alcoholic drinks, you have nothing to fall back upon but the Tea Duty, the Tobacco Duty, and the small duties upon coffee and dried fruits. Let me ask the Committee to consider the props upon which our taxation rests. The basis of our taxation is extremely narrow, and it is incumbent upon us, therefore, to examine both the strength of those great props on which the Revenue rests, and also the forces on the side of Expenditure which may be brought against those props. It is not any diminution of the power of consumption on the part of the people, but it is the diminution of the number of taxed articles, which brings about these striking results to which I have alluded. While the revenue from alcohol has fallen off by more than £4,000,000, the revenue from tea, tobacco, coffee, and dried fruits has only produced an increase of little more than £2,000,000. In 1876 alcoholic liquors brought in £31,000,000, and all other consumable articles £12,000,000; while in 1886 liquors brought in £27,000,000, and everything else £14,000,000, making a total of only £41,000,000, as compared with £43,000,000 in 1876. That is, after 10 years a diminution of £2,000,000, and that with an increase of 10 per cent in the population. Had the population continued to consume dutiable articles at the same rate as it did 10 years ago, the Revenue at this moment ought to be £48,000,000, whereas it is only £41,000,000. That shows the weakness of our position if we intend to rely in the main—I will not examine at this moment whether we ought so to rely—upon taxes on articles of consumption.

I do not wish, in the slightest degree, to rest an argument upon the cost of the breakfast table as it is now compared with what it was 10 or 20 years ago. But it is an interesting fact, which I may mention by way of digression, that the fall in the prices of tea and sugar has been greater than would have been the effect of the total repeal of the duties upon those articles in 1866, and that, at the present time, a cheaper breakfast can be secured with a sixpenny duty on tea than could have been obtained in 1866 had the duties upon tea and sugar been entirely repealed. The fall in the prices of tea and sugar has been so great that, whereas in 1866 a pound of tea and a pound of sugar — I am taking the average wholesale prices—cost 2*s.* 6*d.*, including the duties, and would have cost 1*s.* 10½*d.* without the duties, and whereas in 1876 they cost 2*s.* 1¾*d.*, including the duty on tea, and would have cost 1*s.* 7¾*d.* without that duty, in 1886 their cost is only 1*s.* 7½*d.*, or 3*d.* less than they would have cost in 1866 with all the duties taken off.

I have lingered over these matters in order to prove that from a fiscal point of view the revenue from consumable articles is not in what one would call a satisfactory or an elastic condition. But I do not attribute that fact to the diminished consuming power of the people, but rather to a change in the habits of the working classes. But the fact remains that we have, as compared with 10 years ago, a declining Revenue, and one which, on the present basis, must continue to decline as far as consumable articles are concerned. I must now ask the Committee to turn from these duties which affect the mass of the population to those which affect the well-to-do classes. Let me see whether, in this higher region of prosperity, we can make up for the want of elasticity we find to prevail in the region below. Passenger Duty has decreased from £800,000 to £300,000. But there have been large exemptions in respect of that duty—the exemption of third-class passengers above all—which account for the falling-off in the amount of its produce. The revenue from licences remains nearly stationary, being about £3,500,000; but there is one particular portion of it to which I would direct attention—namely, the licences on the luxuries of the rich—which during the last 10 years have shown a decided and continuous decline. On male servants the amount of licence duty has decreased between 1877 and 1886 from about £167,000 to £137,000. On armorial bearings there has been a diminution from £82,000 to £77,000, and on carriage licences there has been a decrease from £555,000 to £545,000. That is precisely what we should expect would occur during a period of commercial and agricultural depression such as has existed during the last few years, and which has affected the well-to-do classes, and to a certain extent curtailed their luxuries. I will now turn to a more interesting item of the Revenue—I mean the Income Tax. The produce of the Income Tax per penny has increased very slowly during this period, it having fluctuated between £1,850,000 and £2,000,000. But while the total produce per penny has undergone little change, there has been a great change in the produce of the different kinds of property upon which Income Tax is levied. The assessment of lands under Schedule A was £69,000,000 in 1876-7, and £63,000,000 in 1885-6. Houses, on the other hand, which are also assessed under Schedule A, rose in the same period from £103,000,000 to £131,000,000. Under Schedule B, which includes only farming profits, there has been a great falling off. The produce of Schedule B per penny was £74,000 in 1875-6, and only £52,000 in 1885-6. Last year it fell to £47,000 per penny, a fall of 36 per cent in 11 years. That is a fact to which I would call particular attention. What I wish to press upon the Committee is to avoid the mistake of looking at the total of the Income Tax assessments without examining the items. With regard to Schedule D, which is the great stand-by of the Revenue, and the Schedule upon which we used to expect the greatest increase, and by means of which former Chancellors of the Exchequer have been able to treat us to pleasant surprises—Schedule D, containing as it does the profits of trade and business—in 1869 the assessment was £161,000,000, while in 1876 it was £242,000,000, being a jump of £80,000,000 in seven years. But from 1876 to 1886 it only rose from £242,000,000 to £247,000,000, being an increase of only £5,000,000 in 10 years. I wish the Committee to grasp the full significance of these figures. While in the earlier period there was this gigantic increase in the Revenue of the country the turn came in 1876, and since then there has been only an aggregate increase of £5,000,000 in 10 years. I hope the Committee are following me in the line of argument I am pursuing with reference to the elasticity of the Revenue, as it will enable us to see how far we may count upon that elasticity in future.

I now approach a point which I think will be of some considerable interest to the Committee—namely, the distribution of wealth as shown by the produce of Schedule D, because there we arrive at some extraordinary results. In order to test the matter I will take a particular and important district in the City of London, where the assessment under Schedule D is between £16,000,000 and £17,000,000. The gross assessment in respect of individual profits from trades and professions in that district declined from £7,050,000 in 1876 to £6,150,000 in 1886; but, meanwhile, the profits of Public Companies increased from £7,200,000 in 1876 to £10,700,000 in 1886. That, so far, is a circumstance very notable from a social and economic point of view. The creation of large Companies such as those of Guinness and Allsopp secures, at the moment, to the owners the accumulation of past years; but in future the profits of those large undertakings will be distributed over a much wider area, and a much greater part of the population will share in industrial, commercial, and banking undertakings. This is a change which I hail with considerable satisfaction. My inference as to the greater distribution of wealth is singularly borne out by the analysis of the individual profits to which I have just alluded. In the district referred to, the profits of persons whose business income was less than £1,000 per annum increased from £1,540,000 to £1,663,000 between 1876 and 1886, being an increase of 7 per cent; while those of persons having a business income of between £1,000 and £5,000 fell from £1,580,000 to £1,363,000, being a fall of about 14 per cent; and business incomes over £5,000 fell from £3,925,000 to £3,120,000, or a fall of 21 per cent. So that there is this remarkable fact—that below £1,000 the incomes have increased 7 per cent; between £1,000 and £5,000 they have decreased 14 per cent; and on incomes of £5,000 and upwards there is a decrease of 21 per cent. That brings us to the point at which I was driving before—namely, that there is more distribution of wealth, and it is perhaps what I may call the distributing classes whose incomes are below £1,000 who have suffered least from the general depression. The commercial depression has struck at the top; it has struck the great manufacturers; it has also affected the wage-earning class to a certain extent, though they have been largely indemnified by the fall of prices; it has struck at the agricultural classes and the farmers; but the middleman has not suffered to the same extent.

Now, I shall soon be finished with this review of the sources of revenue; still, it is a matter of such importance to the community at large, that I ought not to apologize for lingering so long upon it. To recapitulate, the Committee will remember the position of the consumable articles; they will remember the position of the luxuries of the rich, and what I have said with regard to the slow growth of the Income Tax; and now there only remains the great item of revenue from stamps. And here one would have expected that the progress of business would result in considerable progress in the Stamp Duties. But that is not the case. More business is clearly done, as the Clearing House Returns show; but I am sorry to say that there has been more and more cleverness in evading the Stamp Duties on transfers; and though there is some increase in this Department, I consider the whole region of the Stamp Duties not to be in a satisfactory position. Stamps fall under two great heads—Death Duties, and the duties on deeds, transfers, and conveyances. With regard to the Death Duties, there has been an increase, and a decided increase; though that has been due, as my right hon. Friend opposite is aware, in great part to legislation. But with regard to other stamps there is little change; and there is one curious reason for this that I may mention. All bills, as hon. Members are aware, are taxed *ad valorem* with a rather high tax; but the telegraph has introduced a system of making telegraphic transfers, and now when a remittance has got to be made of £100,000 from New York to London, instead of sending it in bills, which would have to pay a handsome contribution to the Exchequer, men simply send a telegram, saying—"Pay to So-and-so, on such a day, £100,000," and the operation escapes altogether. The result has been a considerable loss; and the ingenuity of Chancellors of the Exchequer ought to be directed, whenever they can find time, to a revision of the whole theory of the Stamp Duties, in order to see how far that valuable resource of the revenue may be made more available. So here, again, I feel obliged to repeat what I have said before, that the Revenue has not been an elastic one, and in no direction of all the sources of revenue which I have examined have I seen that hopeful progress which we might have wished for and expected.

I hope and believe, at the present time, that there is a change—I will not call it considerable—for the better in the aspect of business generally. Whether it extends to agriculture is a matter upon which many hon. Members of this House are much better able to form an opinion than I am. I believe they are not sanguine as to that; but there is an impression that there will be an increase in the commercial prosperity of the country. If I might use an agricultural simile in regard to it, I should say that we may consider that the soil is in a much better condition than it has been in the commercial and industrial world, and more likely to yield a good harvest. There is a better spirit abroad, a spirit of more hopefulness, more confidence, and what business is being done is of a sounder kind than what we have sometimes known. But I do not know to what extent these better auguries may be realized in the present financial year, and it has always been laid down by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) that it takes some time before an increase in the general prosperity of the country really tells in the way of an increase of the Revenue.

Now, having completed my story with regard to the general aspect of the Revenue and the Expenditure in its broadest features, without reference to any particular year, I turn to that which may be of more immediate interest to the Committee—namely, to the Estimates of the coming year. The Committee will bear in mind that, in framing these Estimates, I have had in my mind many of those general considerations which I have thought it right to submit to the House. If hon. Members will turn to page 3 of the printed Statement, they will find the figures I am about to give. Customs, I estimate at £20,200,000, or £45,000 more than the past year; Excise, £25,292,000; Stamps, £11,658,000; Land Tax, £1,065,000; House Duty,

£1,920,000; Property and Income Tax, £15,900,000, the same as the Exchequer receipts of last year—giving a total of Taxes of £76,035,000, or £80,000 less than last year. The Post Office I estimate at £8,600,000; Telegraphs, £1,950,000; Crown Lands, £370,000; Interest on Advances, £1,200,000; Miscellaneous, £3,000,000; making a total produce of Non-Tax Revenue of £15,120,000—the grand total Revenue thus being £91,155,000, as against £90,772,000 in the last year, or an increase of £383,000. The Committee will observe that there is an actual decrease in the produce of taxes in the coming year, which is, however, rather more than made up for by an increase in the Non-Tax Revenue. Customs we put up £45,000 above the Exchequer Receipts of last year; I allow for an increase on tea and tobacco of £85,000 each, but for a decline in foreign spirits of £16,000, and in wine of £102,000. I must point to a curious circumstance connected with this—that in making these Estimates we have not failed to take into account the fact that the coming year is Leap Year, and, therefore, there will be one extra day on which to consume tea, tobacco, and spirits; and, considering the large number of millions over which our Revenue extends, that is not an unimportant point. It is one, however, which is duly remembered in the Estimates. Now, I do not think I need go into further detail with regard to Customs. Excise I put up £42,000, but it is chiefly owing to an increase of £130,000 in beer. I take the decrease on British spirits for the coming year at £52,000. The increase in the consumption of beer will be owing to one or two circumstances—in the first place, the extraordinarily cheap price of hops, a factor which always affects more or less the production of beer; and also to the fact that the recent prosecutions of publicans resulting in the discovery of a considerable adulteration of beer by the use of water have increased and are increasing the production of beer proper, to the exclusion of the water which is mixed with it. And thus, while the Excise officers have been rendering to the drinkers of beer a real service, giving them beer instead of beer and water, they have at the same time done a good stroke of business for the Revenue by substituting an article which is taxed—namely, beer, for an article which is not taxed—namely, water. It appears that there is an increase in the consumption of beer which has been noticed during the last three or four months, and also, taking into consideration the fact that there is an additional day next year, we consider ourselves justified in reckoning on this increase; but in spirits, again, we should do wrong unless we allowed for a decrease, and we put that, as I have said, at £52,000. The Income Tax we have placed at the old figure of £15,900,000—the figure which represents the Exchequer receipts of the past year; but my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby will be especially interested to know that the actual receipts of the Income Tax for 1886-7 have been £16,000,000, and a few thousands more. Now, it will be asked why, with prospects of improved business, with better hopes for the future, do you put the Income Tax as low as £15,900,000? Why do I put the tax so low? Because, under Schedule D, which contributes so great a share of this tax, and which is taken on an average of three years, we get a worse three years on which to average the profits than in the last year. The year 1883 was a better year than 1886. In the past year the profits were estimated on 1883-4-5. In the present year the profits will be estimated on 1884-5-6; and, the profits of those years being less than the profits of the former three years, owing to the substitution of 1886 for 1883, we are not justified in expecting a material or any increase in the Income Tax, especially if we look to the fact that Schedules D and C must make up for what may possibly be a progressive diminution under Schedule A as regards land, and under Schedule B for farming profits. Stamps I put down by £170,000, because that process of collecting arrears to which I have called attention has now almost come to its natural end; and also the effect of the exemption of lineals from the Legacy Duty will be felt in an increasing degree; and also the fall in the value of land will continue to affect Succession Duty. I have shown that the Revenue from taxes will be £80,000 less than in the year before; but the Revenue which is thus reduced in respect of taxes is raised by the Non-Tax Revenue. In the Post

Office, the Telegraphs, and Miscellaneous Receipts, there is an increase of £462,000, giving me a total increase of £382,000 over the Exchequer Receipts of last year.

I have now shown what I estimate my Revenue for the coming year to be. If hon. Members will take the Expenditure for the coming year, we shall arrive at some interesting figures. I estimate the permanent charge on the Debt at £28,036,917; the interest on the Sinking Fund at £641,000; interest on Suez Canal Exchequer Bonds £200,000; and other charges on the Consolidated Fund at £1,714,000. Those charges in the Exchequer issues of the previous year were £29,701,914, which shows an increase of charge in this year of £890,000, the total for 1887-8 being £30,591,917, and the total of last year £29,701,914. This is mainly due to the revival, by law, of the two Sinking Funds which were suspended by the right hon. Member for Derby. One of these funds amounted to upwards of £600,000, and the other to upwards of £200,000. They increase the charge on the total Consolidated Fund by that sum, and I have to allow for that in my Expenditure. To come to the Supply Services, the Army is £18,393,900, as compared with £18,429,272; for the Navy, the Estimate is £12,478,800, as against £13,265,401—a decrease, I am happy to say, of £788,000. The Civil Services are estimated at £17,931,508, as against £17,826,454; Customs and Inland Revenue, £2,715,727, as against £2,676,918; Post Office, £5,420,770, as against £5,436,893; Telegraph Service, £1,950,248, as against £1,935,000; and Packet Service, £699,341, as against £724,900—the total being £59,588,294, as against £60,294,838, a decrease of £707,000 on the total Supply Services. The total Expenditure last year was £89,996,752, and the estimated Expenditure for this year is £90,180,000, being an increase of £183,000.

I will now turn back to the Revenue. The total Revenue I estimated at £91,155,000, and the total Expenditure is £90,180,000, giving me a surplus of £975,000.

I apologize to the Committee for the length at which I have so far detained them; but I must ask them still further to be good enough to lend me their attention, as I have yet several matters of considerable importance to deal with. In fact, I am coming now to what may be considered the most important part of my Statement. It will be asked, having this surplus, what I intend to do with it? The first thing I intend to do with it, if I can persuade the Committee to do so, is to increase it by a change in the Stamp Duties, which I will explain to them, and which will give me an additional Revenue of £100,000. It is rather an intricate subject; but I think I shall be able to make it clear. The Transfer Duty on property generally is 10*s.* per £100, and the Transfer Duty on mortgages and debts is about 6*d.* per £100. The ordinary stock and shares and preference shares of railways have been properly treated as property, and they have the privilege of paying that higher Transfer Duty of 10*s.* which attaches to property. It would appear as if the Legislature had intended that borrowing should be made easier than buying, because it has placed such a small duty on the borrowing process, and a heavy duty on the transfer of property. If that is so, nothing which is real and substantial property ought to escape; and if there are any marketable securities which, under the guise of loans, are really property, I maintain that they ought to be brought within the net, and pay the 10*s.* per £100 which is paid by other kinds of stock. Now, Debenture Stock is an item which has hitherto escaped, as I understand, on this principle—that debentures were regarded as instruments of credit and not as capital, and, perhaps, fairly so, to a certain extent. Debentures expire after a short period, and represent the borrowing operations of a Company. But when they are funded as Debenture Stock they are as much permanent property as any other part of a Company's capital, and Debenture Stock is as good, or better, than Ordinary or Preference Stock, or any other form of marketable security, and therefore I do not see that it should escape the ordinary rate of duty on the transfer of property. It had one claim for exemption in times past, which was that instead of being taxed on transfer, like ordinary Stock, Debenture Stock paid a small initial duty of 2*s.* 6*d.* at its birth, and that initial duty emancipated it from the heavy Transfer Duties afterwards. But debentures, by a later Act, were charged 2*s*. 6*d*. per cent on transfer, and that is the tax which I now propose to raise to 10*s*., thus placing Debenture Stock on the same footing as ordinary and Preference Stock.

A further change in the law, which I intend to ask the Committee to accept, is to apply to the Stamp Duties on transfers a principle which has been extremely valuable in most forms of taxation—namely, to tax at the fountain head, rather than lower down, and to see whether we can collect in one sum, rather than to collect in a number of small sums. I propose, therefore, that a tax of 1*s*. per £100 of their total capital should be annually paid by all Companies, whose ordinary Stock now pays 10*s*. a £100 on transfer, which tax should clear those Companies which elect to submit to it, and emancipate all their capital stock from paying any transfer duty at all. We take it from the Companies, instead of the transferers. The Companies will be able, if they chose, to recoup themselves, by charging those who come to them with transfers with the identical fee now charged, so to speak, by the Government. They could secure themselves against loss in that way; but, whether they will do so or not, I cannot tell until the experiment has been tried. But we do not propose to make this compulsory on all Companies, because the proprietors of some of the Companies may claim that the transfers in their Stocks are so few that they would suffer grievous loss by the change. But in those Companies where transfers are frequently made, it is believed that it would be extremely popular that these transfers should be entirely exempt from the Stamp Duty, and, on the whole, I believe the change will be so popular, that it will be accepted by the great bulk of the Companies. The general effect of this change upon the Revenue would be that if transfers were conducted on the same scale as at present, there would neither be much loss nor much gain on either side; but I should not be doing my duty as Chancellor of the Exchequer if I did not take care that, if there were a gain one way or the other, that gain should be on the side of the Revenue. The duty of 1*s*. per £100 on the property of the Companies will rather exceed the total amount which is now derived from transfers, thus leaving a margin even if Companies, in whose Stocks there are few transfers, should not adopt it. But I have taken valuable opinions on the subject, and, though I may be mistaken, I believe that the vast majority of Companies will themselves welcome the change, and that shareholders will find it to their interest to urge the acceptance of this composition. [Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Is it optional?] Yes. We should much prefer to make it compulsory; but there would possibly be much opposition on the part of some of the Companies, and therefore we propose, in the first place, to make it optional; but we think the convenience will be found to be so great that all the Companies will soon see that it is to their advantage to adopt this arrangement. [Mr. ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Government Stock?] For Government Stock there is already a composition. Colonial and Government Stocks all stand at present under a separate arrangement, and the change does not apply to them. I should be glad, however, to make a further statement on this important matter at a later stage. Before leaving the subject of the Stamp Duties, I must say that I expect, from the changes proposed, an increase of over £100,000, which, however, will be reduced to £100,000 by a small remission of taxation in respect of policies of Marine Insurance, to which I shall presently refer.

I have now to ask the Committee to follow me into a subject which is considerably more intricate than any of those on which I have been engaged, and if I fail to make myself clear I trust the Committee will not think it is due to any confusion in my own mind, but to the inherent difficulty of the question. I wish the Committee to leave for a moment this balance of £975,000, increased to £1,075,000 by the £100,000 of which I have spoken, and to accompany me for a few minutes into a different branch of the subject; but I hope we may come back to our balance, and with something satisfactory in our hands. I wish now to deal with a subject which ought to engage the most earnest attention of the Committee, and that is the subject of local loans and the use of the public credit, which from day to day is now extending in larger and larger measure, not, I think, without some risks to the Revenue, and not without possibly impairing ultimately the credit of the State. That for which I am most anxious is that the public should know precisely how it stands; that it should know what liabilities it has incurred, and how it has raised money to meet them; what is the revenue derived from the Local Authorities to whom the State has lent money, and what is the charge resting on the Exchequer for the money which has thus been raised. There have been in the present century over £100,000,000 found by the State for local loans in the United Kingdom. I shall presently state to the Committee how much of that sum has been paid off and how much has been lost—because there have been material losses on sums which have been lent—and how much remains outstanding. But first let me point out how the money has been raised for this purpose. A portion of it has been paid out of Exchequer balances, and that has vanished in our general finance. There is no notice taken in any of our records of expenditure with reference to these advances which have been made direct from the Exchequer in past times. Another portion of the money has been raised by Exchequer Bonds and Bills, and Treasury Bills. There is a further complication caused by the fact that, again, some of these securities have been funded. Another portion still has been provided by the National Debt Commissioners out of their Savings Banks moneys with which the Public Works Loan Commissioners have been put in funds — an operation which does not enter into the national accounts at all, only the surplus of interest being paid into the Exchequer. The result of this most confused and unsatisfactory state of things is that nobody can see at a glance how much money we really have contributed towards local loans, or what the charge on the Revenue is on account of those local loans. Hon. Members who are familiar with the accounts know that there is an item of about £960,000 in the Miscellaneous Revenue derived from interest on local loans. But that does not represent the whole interest on local loans, because a further sum is paid direct by the Public Works Loan Commissioners to the National Debt Commissioners; and it is only by very great trouble that you can bring the whole of the figures together and see precisely how the case stands.

Again, this money has been lent out by different Bodies and in different ways. Some loans have been made by the Public Works Loan Commissioners in England, and others by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, and by the Land Commissioners in Ireland. Now, what I venture to think is essential, especially in view of the growing character of these demands for local loans, is that a separate account altogether should be kept with regard to this kind of expenditure and revenue, and I propose to take it entirely out of the Budget, and to establish a separate account, with separate receipts and expenditure. The Committee will see that no one can estimate what our National Debt is if we do not know against how much of it there are sets-off on the other side. For instance, if we were to add to local loans £10,000,000, we might raise them by adding £10,000,000 to Consols. That £10,000,000 would then enter into the body of our National Debt; and it might seem that we had increased the National Debt while we had not really increased it. We had been incurring a liability, but we had an asset on the other side. Therefore, by a somewhat complicated process, I want to clear the National Budget entirely from local loans, parting with the interest which is now paid to the National Exchequer, and, at the same time, relieving ourselves of so much of the Debt as is represented by existing and solvent local loans.

Let me point out how, under the present system, local loans are dealt with. It has been an economical system, but it appears to me to be essentially faulty in principle. Local loans run for 25, 30, and 40 years, and even longer. They are long loans, but we have been financing these local loans partly by the issue of Treasury Bills, repayable every three or six months. On the first aspect of the matter, we have, no doubt, raised this money on very economical terms. We have been borrowing to supply the funds for local loans at a rate as low as 2½ per cent; but who can guarantee that in the course of a year, or two years hence, when we have to renew these Treasury Bills, we may not have to pay a much higher rate of interest? We might have to pay 4 per cent, or even more, in troublous times; and I hold that it is bad finance to borrow on Treasury Bills for three months or six months for what I may call a permanent purpose. Therefore, I propose to discontinue the system of borrowing on Treasury Bills for local loan purposes, although I am not opposed to borrowing by those Bills for certain other purposes.

The plan I have to propose I will now describe. The debt we have contracted in respect of local loans that are still in force now stands as follows:—£8,600,000 was raised by Exchequer Bonds, now funded and represented by Consols, and these 2½ per cent Exchequer and Treasury Bills are outstanding to the extent of £6,400,000, making together £15,000,000. Then the National Debt Commissioners have £9,500,000 employed in the hands of the Public Works Loan Commissioners, to whom they have lent direct. That makes a total of £24,500,000. The remainder of £12,700,000 was advanced out of Exchequer balances, and brings up the total to £37,200,000. That is the amount of local loans which is now outstanding, after deducting the sums that have been lost and remitted, Now, what I propose to do is to create £37,200,000 of Local Loan Stock, which will represent the precise sum now outstanding and owing by the localities. On that £37,200,000 there will be interest to pay at 3 per cent, which will constitute a charge on the Local Loan Fund. On the other hand, there will be transferred to that fund the £960,000 now paid direct to the Exchequer, as well as the sum which is now paid over to the National Debt Commissioners by the Public Works Loan Commissioners, so that this new account will receive the whole revenue derived from the interest on local loans, and will be charged with the whole of the interest on the Local Loans Stock of £37,200,000.

It will be of interest to the House and the country to know that there were advanced to the localities up to the 31st of March, 1887, £106,000,000. Of that sum, £57,200,000 have been repaid, the total sum unpaid being £48,800,000; and, £11,600,000 having been remitted, there remains the total outstanding sum of £37,200,000. [An hon. MEMBER: Is the £11,600,000 absolute loss?] Yes; the £11,600,000 is absolute loss. Now, of the amount remitted which represents absolute loss, about £7,000,000 is due to the Irish Famine; and with regard to that I say nothing, because that was a loan made by the nation with its eyes open, and under very peculiar circumstances. But I call the attention of the Committee to the remainder, which has been lost, because it is often argued that there is a profit in the margin between the 3 per cent at which the State can borrow, and the 3¼ or 3½ per cent paid by the Local Authorities. But you must establish a margin which will enable you to repay any losses which may occur. It may be said that there will be no losses, but in reply to that I point to the past, and say that the losses which remain are considerable and ought to be provided for in future arrangements. [Mr. MUNDELLA: English losses?] I would ask not to be invited to discuss particulars now. My statement includes all losses—English losses, as well as Irish losses—but it would take me too far from the present point to go into the details. I hope, however, that my right hon. Friend, who has views on the Exchequer on some important points on which I am extremely apprehensive, does not imply that, the losses being Irish losses, there is no fear of loss on advances for English purposes. I do not know whether that is the meaning of my right hon. Friend; but, at all events, I say this—that as prudent lenders, when we do lend, we should do so with the idea that there is always the possibility of a loss, whatever may be the precautions we take to prevent it; and I hope, therefore, all those who are thoroughly interested in finance will do their best to insist that there shall be a margin, from which such losses may be made good. I have said that we are going to create £37,200,000 of Stock. As against this, I cancel £9,500,000 of the Bonds of the Public Works Loan Commissioners; I cancel £15,000,000 of existing 3 per cent Stock representing the Funded and Unfunded Debt now earmarked as Local Loans Debt, and which stands outside the permanent charge; and, besides that, I cancel a further amount of existing 3 per cent Stock—namely £12,700,000, which represents money lent directly from the Exchequer balances to the borrowing Authorities. The National Debt would have been

£12,700,000 less if we had applied the balances as they were available for the reduction of the National Debt, instead of lending them out; and I am thus restoring, as it were, the position as it would have been if that money had not been so lent, by cancelling so much Funded Debt, while I create Local Loans Stock, on the other hand, to represent it.

I have myself had so much trouble in thoroughly mastering the details of this complicated business that I feel that I cannot ask any Member of the Committee to grasp the whole of the case, from the necessarily imperfect explanations I am able to make in my present Statement. I trust, however, the Committee will take from me this—that we establish an entirely new Local Loans Budget, and on that Budget everyone will be able to see precisely how the case stands. There will be a margin on that Budget, because the cost of paying the interest on the £37,200,000 will be less than the revenue produced by the interest of local loans. But I wish to charge this Local Loan Budget with an annuity, which I believe will amount to about £150,000, to make good the £4,000,000 which we have been obliged to write off, or to meet any new losses which may occur. I am anxious that the Committee and the public should know and remember that there has been this loss, and that it should be marked in this way by a special item in the Budget each year. Then, as fresh local loans are made, they will be made either out of repayments on the existing loans, falling in from year to year, or by the creation not of further National Debt, but of fresh Local Loans Stock. The financial effect, so far as the National Budget is concerned, is this—On the one hand, the Exchequer will no longer receive the Revenue amounting to £960,000 in respect of interest on Local Loans; on the other hand, we shall have no longer to provide for the charge amounting to about £630,000 in connection with Debt created for Local Loan purposes. There will, therefore, be an increase in the net Debt charge of about £330,000.

I have now to take the Committee into the very interesting subject of the charge for the National Debt. The Committee is aware of the circumstances under which the late Sir Stafford Northcote fixed the permanent charge for that Debt at £28,000,000, which has been increased to £28,037,000 by subsequent operations. The Committee is also aware that a portion of that has been suspended several times under the stress of war operations. Even during the last year the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) felt compelled to suspend the Sinking Fund to the extent of about £800,000. I wish to examine this matter in a comprehensive spirit; but I fear that I have nearly exhausted my time. I have had passing through my mind various circumstances which bear on the point, whether that sum of £28,000,000 has been rightly fixed; and when I say that, I do so with the full sense of the responsibility which I am incurring when I raise the question. The Committee will have noticed the enormous falling off, I will not say in one year or five years, but in a course of years, in the elasticity of the Revenue. The Committee will be aware that the growth of the Revenue which was expected has been absent, and that it does not now grow in proportion to the increase of the population. Does the Committee remember that when the charge of £28,000,000 was fixed the Income Tax stood at 2*d.* in the pound? It stands now at 8*d.* This is a notable point. At the end of the year 1874-5 the total charge on taxes was £62,633,000; the net Debt charge was £26,495,000; so that the total charge on taxes for the whole of the other Services, exclusive of the Debt charge, was £36,138,000. Last year, the total charge on taxes was £75,340,000, the net Debt charge being £26,596,000, even after the Sinking Fund had been suspended, otherwise it would have been greater. The total left for other purposes than the National Debt was £48,744,000, as compared with £36,138,000. We are paying, exclusive of Debt charge, £12,600,000 more in taxes than at the time when the late Sir Stafford Northcote made this proposal. Now, the late Sir Stafford Northcote anticipated that there would be an ordinary growth of Revenue, and these are his words—

> "I have no doubt, under ordinary circumstances, with the ordinary growth of Revenue, that we shall be very easily able, without any injustice to the country, to bring up the charge for Debt to £28,000,000."

["Hear, hear!"] Yes; but "easily." To be able to do so, we have been obliged to increase the Income Tax to 8*d.* Sir Stafford Northcote went on to say—

> "But, if this should materially alter, it would be only right to take steps to remove what we now put on."

What I want the Committee to examine is, whether the circumstances have materially altered from that time when Sir Stafford Northcote proposed his Budget. When he proposed to increase the amount to £28,000,000—which he did not do at once, but spread over two or three years—we were at the end of a period of great prosperity. There was then, in the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and in the minds of us all, the knowledge that the Revenue had gone on increasing by leaps and bounds. Now, let the Committee return to the figures I supplied in the earlier portion of my Statement, when I showed how there had been, in the quinquennial period preceding the time at which the £28,000,000 was fixed, an increase in the produce of taxes other than the Income Tax, amounting to 24 per cent, and that afterwards there was a decrease amounting to 3 per cent. It appears to me that the situation now is totally different; and I say, in the interest of the steady and efficient repayment of the National Debt, that it would be unwise if we were to strain our bow too tight, and if, in endeavouring to defend the £28,000,000, we were to insist on maintaining any kind of tax permanently at an unreasonable height. What has been our course during the last few years? It has not been satisfactory. The Sinking Funds have had to be suspended, and they will be suspended again, so surely as anything occurs which strains in the slightest degree the resources of the country. I admit the plausibility of the argument, that it is better you should suspend the Sinking Fund when there is distress, rather than that you should impose additional taxation. But I am not satisfied that the argument is sound. I think it is a most wholesome restraint upon any expeditions or costly undertakings that it should be necessary to impose taxation, and that you should not be able to cut the knot simply by suspending the Sinking Fund. I admit that the Sinking Fund is an admirable institution, and I should be sorry to tamper with it to any great extent. But, looking to the present situation, and at the fact that, practically, the whole burden of paying off the Debt has to be borne by the payers of Income Tax, I am disposed to think that in the interests of sound finance, and with the view of keeping up steady repayments, it is advisable to reconsider our position. I have shown the Committee that there is danger in our present financial position, because, while there is an increasing temptation to Expenditure, there is no increasing Revenue to rely upon. I do not know whether new sources of Revenue are opening out to the minds of my right hon. Friends; but unless we can discover new sources of Revenue, they will see that the retention of the present Debt charge must be a matter of increasing difficulty. For my own part, I see fresh dangers threatening the payers of direct taxation in the future. It has been a question continually argued in this House whether the contribution which is made by personal property to the rates is insufficient. I have often argued to the contrary myself; but the majority of the House have decided over and over again that, in some form or other, personal property will have to contribute to local taxation. With this prospect before us, is it reasonable to maintain the Income Tax, in a time of peace, at four times the figure at which it stood when the Debt charge was fixed at its present amount? Or is it reasonable, to take another point, that we should so hamper ourselves with a heavy Debt charge, that we have never anything to spare for reforms of taxation, involving an immediate loss, but which may promise great ultimate advantage to the Revenue?

I do not suggest any large or heroic measure in connection with this matter, but I do intend to submit a proposal to the Committee. I am sorry that I shall offend against the paternal affections of my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), because the way I propose to reduce the charge from £28,000,000 is by dealing with the Rolling Annuities which he established. These Rolling Annuities are very complicated, and they do great credit to the ingenuity of my right hon. Friend. There are three Annuities, each amounting to £1,200,000; one for five, one for 10, and one for 15 years. They are called Rolling Annuities because, when they cease, they are re-enacted in a different form. That is to say, as each Annuity expires a further amount of Stock is to be cancelled in exchange for a new Terminable Annuity of the same amount as that then expiring. I propose to simplify these three Rolling Annuities, and to roll them up into one Annuity of the sum of £1,930,000, in lieu of the present Rolling Annuities amounting to £3,600,000. The permanent charge of Debt will be fixed at £26,000,000, as against the present permanent charge of £28,037,000. By this means the apparent relief is £2,037,000; but the Committee will remember that, under the new Local Loans Debt arrangement, the Exchequer will lose a net round receipt of £333,000. Therefore, the real relief will be £1,704,000. The provision which the proposed permanent charge of £26,000,000 contains for reducing Debt is, of course, exclusive of the operation of the old Sinking Fund. I will not trouble the Committee with any further details on that point, except to show how this will work in the future. I think the Committee will see that the amount of Debt which will still be annually redeemed will be very large indeed. It may be remembered that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) made a proposal in 1881, which, however, he did not proceed with, under which £60,000,000 of Stock would have been redeemed by 1904 by means of Terminable Annuities. Under my proposal we shall by that time have redeemed £70,000,000 of Stock by means of Terminable Annuities. The amount devoted to the repayment of Debt inside the charge of £26,000,000 will, in the present year, be about £5,000,000; and I have made a calculation that if the charge of £26,000,000 be steadily persevered with, we shall redeem £600,000,000 at par in about 52 years, and £700,000,000 in 56 years.

I submit these considerations to the Committee with the observation that I have spent so much time upon the figures themselves that I have not been able sufficiently to elaborate the arguments just addressed to the House. I rest my proposal, however, upon this broad ground—that the situation is totally different from what it was when the present arrangements were made, and that Sir Stafford Northcote himself contemplated that if the circumstances altered it would be necessary to alter his system; and I lay great stress upon the fact that, unless we put the matter into what I may call an endurable form, you will risk far larger inroads upon the Sinking Fund than that which I now propose. I remind the Committee of the great difficulty which existed when taxation had to be imposed to meet special charges not long ago. An additional 2*d.* was put upon the payers of Income Tax, and proposals were made to tax some consumable articles. Those proposals were rejected by the House, which had to fall back on the simple process of increasing the Income Tax by 2*d.*, and of suspending the Sinking Fund. The Sinking Fund, I maintain, is not in a strong position; it has been proved to be in an unsafe position while it continues as heavy as it is at present.

I now go back to the Surplus of which I have spoken—namely, £1,075,000, and to this must be added the relief given by the £1,704,000 taken from the Debt charge. I have, therefore, a sum to deal with of £2,779,000. The Committee will have anticipated, from the arguments which I have used, that a reduction in the Income Tax would naturally follow, and I propose to reduce the Income Tax by 1*d.* in the pound, which involves a loss of £1,560,000 in the present year, because in these cases you do not have the whole loss in the first year. Before I pass from the subject of the Income Tax there is another change which I propose to make, which will not lead to much loss of Revenue, and the small probable loss from which is included in the £1,560,000. It is a relief that, to my mind, is an act of justice, and which will be given to a rather suffering portion of the community. I wish to renew a proposal which was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh—namely, to give farmers the option of being taxed on their actual profits under Schedulde D, rather than on the arbitrary basis adopted in Schedule B. Farmers and occupiers of land, generally, are taxed on the half of their rent in England, and on one-third of their rent in Ireland and Scotland. The question is, have farmers earned half their rent during late times? I know that in many cases farmers have been paying Income Tax on a larger amount than they have actually earned. I judge from the fact that out of a total of upwards of 400,000 assessments, there have only been 10,000 cases of appeal against what appears, on the face of it, to be too high a charge. In many parts of England the profits have, as a rule, been a great deal less than half the rent. When the proposal was made before, it was suggested that the farmers did not keep accounts, and that they would not be able to make statements of their profits, and that they would, therefore object to be charged under Schedule D. To get over that difficulty I propose, for the present, to maintain Schedule B, so that they may still be charged under that Schedule if they prefer it; but if they wish it, they can be charged under Schedule D. The exercise of this option will obviate the necessity of a local appeal, which involves proceedings in the localities to which objection is taken, and will give the farmers an opportunity of appealing to the Special Commissioners in the same manner as other persons who are assessable under Schedule D.

This question of the farmers reminds me of the ratepayers and of the promises which have been often held out, and the plans which have been continually entertained, with regard to large reforms in our system of local finance. The Committee is aware that the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) has a large measure in preparation which deals both with the subject of local authorities and that of local finances. The Government has recognized, and previous Governments have recognized, that it is their duty to go forward in this matter, and to recast local finance to a very considerable extent. But the difficulty has always been this—and it is a difficulty which remains at this moment—that you cannot begin your financial reform until you have constituted your new authorities. Nor will you be able to have half the interest taken in the Bill and half the steam-power, so to speak, necessary to carry it, if all the financial reforms are made in the first instance. Now, Her Majesty's Government stand by that doctrine as their Predecessors have stood by it, and they hope for the assistance of Parliament in order that they may have the earliest possible opportunity of producing their plan. Hon. Gentlemen will ask, perhaps, whether something might not be done in the interval—whether the principle of handing over taxes to Local Authorities, which has been the favourite scheme of Local Government reformers, should not at least be initiated? It may be asked, for instance, whether the Carriage Tax cannot be handed over at once to the localities? Well, I am prepared to hand over an amount equivalent to the Carriage Tax to the Local Authorities. The contribution which is now made in relief of main roads and turnpikes in England and Scotland, is £280,000. I propose to double that contribution, and give them £560,000, which is about the amount of the Carriage Tax, until such time as we can hand over the Carriage Tax itself.

Looking to the long-enduring patience of those who have been promised relief, and who, through the accidents of legislation, have had that relief delayed, and may still have it delayed for another year, I think some concession should be made at once. It should be distinctly understood that this is not a permanent arrangement, and that it is only in anticipation of the transfer of the Carriage Tax in future; and it is in view of the transference of that tax in its entirety at some early day to the Local Authorities, that I have been unable to revise the whole of it in the manner which was pressed upon me by a very influential deputation. To use a forcible expression, such deputations may "have it out" with the Local Authorities when the Carriage Tax is transferred.

Hon. Members from Ireland will possibly be wondering whether, if England and Scotland get a boon which amounts to £245,000 for England and £35,000 for Scotland, Ireland is to be forgotten entirely. Ireland contributes nothing towards the Carriage Tax, and, therefore, so far as the transfer of the tax to Local Authorities for main roads and turnpikes is concerned, Ireland would have no claim. At the same time—and we have had debates on this subject—I do not consider that Ireland is paying too little to the Imperial Revenue as it stands at the present time. I demur to the statement that Ireland is paying too little as I do to the statement that she is paying too much. In making these concessions to England and Scotland, I do not wish to change the present balance as between Ireland and Great Britain; and, therefore, I propose to reserve £50,000 for Ireland, for what I call purposes analogous to this contribution on account of main roads in England and Scotland. I am not disposed to think that this should be given in aid of the county cess, as the relief in England is given to the county rate; because the amount is so small that it would not be an appreciable benefit to the taxpayers. I consider that it would be a better system to give the bulk of it in aid of arterial drainage, to which so much importance is attached, and which has been inquired into by a Royal Commission, whose Report is shortly expected. [Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): How much a year?] It will be £50,000 a-year, on the same terms as the temporary arrangement with regard to England and Scotland. I shall be able at a later time, when the Report of the Commission has been presented, to come to a clearer conclusion as to the best mode of applying this £50,000. I have omitted to say that the grant of £245,000 in England is given to the County Authority and not to the Highway Authority. The present system is that the County pays a half, and the Highway Authority a half, but that a half of the Highway Authority's half—that is to say, a quarter of the whole—is repaid to the Highway Authority by the State. We should propose henceforth to pay a quarter to the County Authority, besides continuing to pay the quarter to the Highway Authority. That will apply also to Scotland, and in the Metropolis, where the roads are under Local Authority. [Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): The whole is to be paid to the County Authority?] Yes; the whole of the additional contribution.

I now pass on to another point—the last but one with which I shall trouble the Committee. I spoke of the desirability of making occasional changes in duties, not simply for the purpose of remitting taxation, but with the object of improving our financial system. We ought to have margin enough to rectify an error when it is made. There is one error which, I believe, all parties admit to have been made in the fiscal legislation of late years—namely, the raising of the Tobacco Duties by 4*d.* The Tobacco Duties were raised from 3*s.* 2*d.* or, more strictly, 3*s.* 1⅗*d.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* in 1878, and the fiscal result of that has been most unsatisfactory. The first year under the higher duty was expected to yield an increased revenue of £750,000; but it only yielded £500,000 additional, and in subsequent years the result has been still more unfavourable. The increase in the consumption of tobacco, which was 11 per cent during the five years between 1872 and 1876, fell to 5·8 per cent in the period between 1877 and 1881, when the new rate of duty first came into operation, and to 4·4 per cent in the period between 1882 and 1886, when it was in full force. The change checked the consumption of tobacco; what was the effect upon the quality of the tobacco I must leave to smokers to determine. It will be seen that the consumption per head has not increased in the ratio of the population. The increase in the consumption of tobacco before the duty was raised was twice as great as the increase of population; but since that time the consumption has not increased as fast as the population. The consumption per head is now less than it was. But there is this most curious fact. It is not quite so certain that people have smoked less pipes or fewer cigars than before. The same thing has occurred with tobacco as with beer. There has been an admixture of water with the tobacco to increase weight. Hon. Members will recollect that the duty is 3*s.* 6*d.*, and the ordinary price which a working man pays for his tobacco is 4*s.* a pound. He pays 3*d.* per ounce for his tobacco. When the duty was increased it was supposed that he would pay 3¼*d.*, and that, in that way, the dealers and manufacturers would be able to recoup themselves. But that is not what has happened. He still will not pay more than 3*d.* per ounce; and, therefore, tobacco has to be produced at 3*d.* How is this done? It is done by increasing the amount of water contained in the tobacco. The purchaser buys a nominal ounce as before, but he really buys less tobacco and more water; and, in that way, the Revenue loses and the smoker gets a worse article. The price of 3*d.* is almost too small to enable the manufacturer to produce the tobacco with the duty at 3*s.* 6*d.*, and I propose to reduce the duty from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* 2*d.*—3*s.* 2*d.* precisely, not 3*s.* 1⅗*d.* which it used to be. That, I trust, will be a considerable boon to those amongst the working classes who smoke tobacco; and, although it will not affect their pockets, they will get a better article. What we have to provide against is that the purchaser shall not get precisely the same article as he did before the duty was reduced, and therefore we propose to limit, by law, the watering process by which at present the dealer recoups himself for the extra duty. At present tobacco is often sold containing 40 or 45 per cent of water. In future we propose to make it illegal to sell tobacco containing more than 35 per cent of water. In the same way as in the case of beer, when deterioration by water has been put a stop to, we shall hope for an increased yield of duty, because more tobacco will be disposed of. What we propose in this matter involves an immediate loss to the Revenue of £600,000; but if it restores the old prosperity of the tobacco trade it will be a gain in the long run.

I come now to my last point—namely, a small charge which I propose to make upon a certain limited class of policies of marine assurance. There are policies where the premium amounts to less than ⅛ per cent, or 2*s.* 6*d.* in the £100. The present duty of 3*d.* upon these constitutes a very large proportion of their total cost to the insurer; and where the premium is, for instance, only 9*d.*, which is often the case with regard to articles transmitted from France, the duty amounts to 33 per cent of the premium; but on all premiums of 2*s.* 6*d.* it amounts to 10 per cent. The effect of this heavy charge is to drive the greater part of the insurance business to Paris and other foreign cities, the English Insurance Companies being unable to compete with the low premiums of foreign Companies. We propose to put 1*d.* only on all policies where the premium amounts to 2*s.* 6*d.* or less per cent. That will involve a loss to the Revenue of about £20,000; but this I have already taken account of in putting my net gain in respect of changes in the Stamp Duties at £100,000.

I will now, with the permission of the Committee, to whom I beg to return my most hearty thanks for the extreme kindness with which they have listened to my statement, summarize the proposals I have made. I have a surplus of about £975,000. The Debt charge is reduced by £1,704,000. There is a gain of £100,000 by changes in the Stamp Duties. That gives a total of £2,779,000. I propose to take £600,000 off the Tobacco Duties; 1*d.* from the Income Tax, which represents £1,560,000; then there are grants of £280,000 in aid of local taxation in England and Wales, and £50,000 for arterial drainage in Ireland. That makes a total of £2,490,000, which, taken from £2,779,000, leaves a balance of £289,000, or, in round numbers, £300,000. These are the proposals which I submit to the Committee.

I have felt painfully, whilst giving my best attention to these matters in the short time I have held my present Office, that it has not been possible for me to go so exhaustively into the question of the taxation of the country as a Chancellor of the Exchequer is bound to do. I acknowledge, in submitting these partial proposals, that I leave untouched many of those tasks to which a Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to give his attention. I leave untouched the Death Duties, which require attention in the promptest manner. I have said that in the Stamp Duties there are large reforms to be made. There is the question of the currency and the coinage, with its results upon the Revenue, which is a matter for future consideration. There is the whole question of local taxation which has to be examined and probed to the bottom. With all these great subjects I have been unable to deal; but I feel that if I had been able to submit proposals with regard to them, such large questions would have been involved that it would have been impossible to find time for their discussion in the present state of business. I have left also to the future the analysis of the proportions in which the different parts and classes of the Empire contribute to Imperial taxation and the consideration whether those proportions are just. It is certainly the duty of a Chancellor of the Exchequer to review these great questions, which have, perhaps, been too long allowed to drift. It may be that the relation which is borne by the taxation of the working classes to that of other classes is too high, or it may be that, in consequence of the change, which, as I have proved, has taken place, in the comparative productiveness of different branches of the Revenue, it is not too high; but what I wish earnestly to impress upon the Committee, both as an individual and as a Member of the Government, is, that they are not to conclude from the fact that I only submit these proposals, that we are not perfectly aware that there are much larger tasks before us—much larger tasks either for ourselves or those who may follow us.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable on Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say), on

Tea . . . the pound . Sixpence."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): It is quite superfluous that I should express my congratulations to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) upon the ability with which he has performed his task, an ability which everyone knew he would display as the result of his experience in commercial affairs. I confess I have heard his statement with reference to the yield of the Revenue and the result of last year's finance with some satisfaction. I remember that at the time it was my duty to bring forward the Budget people were determined to take a very dismal view of the condition of the country. When I ventured to lay before the House an Estimate of the Revenue last year, I was warned in a paternal manner by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) that I was much too sanguine, and that things were so bad that it was impossible that it could come up to the Estimate which I made. I was warned with still greater authority by the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool (Mr. Baden-Powell), who demonstrated by very elaborate figures that no such Revenue could possibly be looked for, owing to the condition of the country. I entirely refused to take that view of the financial situation. No doubt, there is a great loss of that elasticity which for a certain period characterized English finance; but it would be entirely wrong to form an estimate of the general condition of the finance of the country from the standard of that particular period. I was a little surprised that my right hon. Friend should have referred to that period for a standard by which to judge the future finance of the country. The truth is that no great falling-off has occurred, and that the resources of the country are well maintained. I contended last year—and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer admits the fact—that there is no proof of failure in the consuming power of the people; and there is no proof of failure in their accumulating wealth. The latter is quite plain from the fact that the yield from the Death Duties has not diminished; last year it reached a point which it never reached before, and it is not much lower this year. Then, as regards the Income Tax, I am glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the yield of the penny has reached the highest point, with the exception of one or two years, that it has ever reached. That seems to me to show that, in spite of all we have heard, there is no failure of resources of Revenue, and that they are, in fact, quite unimpaired. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer shows that there is greater distribution of the wealth of the country; but surely that is not a bad thing, because it gives greater stability to your finance, which rests not upon the few, but the many, which proves that the condition of the country, as a whole, has improved. Now, no doubt there has been a great falling-off in the spirit revenue since the year before last. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has explained that the variation between the Customs and the Excise upon the yield of this year is a mere transfer from one account to another. Now, as regards beer, another great test of the consuming power of the people, the revenue has been very steady since 1882. I observe that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer estimates a considerable rise in the Beer Duty in the future year. As regards wine, I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman will tell us what he has not already told us—namely, what is the amount of the loss on wine which is due to the Spanish Treaty. I think it was estimated at something like £80,000 or £90,000, but I do not know whether that Estimate has been reached or exceeded.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I must apologize for not having mentioned the point. As a matter of fact, the loss has been larger than the figures quoted by the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: The Wine Duty is a decreasing duty unquestionably. It is a decreasing duty from a multitude of causes. It is decreasing partly because, as we have all noticed at the tables we frequent, a great deal less wine is drunk than was formerly consumed. In future the quantity of wine consumed in this country will still further diminish, owing to the reduced quantity of good wine that is produced, and to the fact that the population of the world is rapidly increasing. The Wine Duty, therefore, which has decreased, must continue to decrease. The revenue from tea, however, is increasing in a most satisfactory manner. The duty derived from the consumption of tea is £300,000 more than it was in the previous year. It is £127,000 more than estimated, and this sum represents the increased consumption in a single year. The increase of the Tobacco Duty has been slow. Well, the remarks I have made have been with reference to the yield upon the consumption of the people as regards articles of Customs and Excise; and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was good enough to say something civil of the former Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the calculations of the yield of these articles. But the merit does not really belong to the Chancellor of the Exchequer at all—it belongs to those able and competent gentlemen who are at the head of the Departments of Customs and Excise, and who have shown such marvellous skill in estimating the produce of these articles, and whose advice every Chancellor of the Exchequer who is wise and prudent will always abide by. I have often heard people say—indeed, when I produced my Estimates last year, it was said—"Oh, these Estimates are a great deal too high." Sometimes people say the Estimates are too low; but the people who express these opinions have no means of judging at all. The opinions upon which the right hon. Gentleman acts are those of the people who are thoroughly competent to form a judgment. Well, now, passing from the Revenue which tests the consuming power of the people, just let us look at the items which relate to the wealthier classes. Now, here is the Probate Duty, which has been very steady during the last four years. It is a little over £4,000,000. Therefore, when people talk about the general ruin of all classes of the landed interest and of the commercial classes, how comes it that your Probate Duty yields practically as much as it did before these periods of assumed and asserted distress? Now, the Legacy and Succession Duty has yielded more than the Estimate, because the anticipated falling-off, which was supposed to accrue in consequence of the loss of the arrears which have been collected in former years, has not proved as great as expected. General stamps have yielded £200,000 more than estimated. This, no doubt, is due to the greater activity of commercial enterprize in transactions of Companies like Messrs. Allsopps'. I am surprised at one observation made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer—namely, that the stamps were a source of revenue that did not increase. I must have misapprehended what the right hon. Gentleman intended to say, because, according to my observation, stamps have very largely increased in recent years. I hold in my hands *The Statistical Abstract*, and if you look at the Estimate of the stamps in a succession of years you will find that the yield of the Stamp Duty is much larger than it was in former times. You will find, for instance, that in the year 1876 the revenue from stamps was much lower than it is at the present time. These circumstances do not show any failure in the Revenue and in the resources of the country. Well, now, take the Income Tax. The Income Tax has yielded £145,000 more than the Estimate; and therefore, I confess, I cannot concur altogether in the rather despondent view which the right hon. Gentleman takes of the condition of the Revenue. I have no doubt some figures connected with the alcoholic revenue will continue to fall. There is no question that the habits of the people are tending more and more to the discontinuance of the consumption of alcoholic drinks. Those were remarkable figures which were given in a letter to *The Times* newspaper some weeks ago as to the consumption of alcoholic drinks by the people. It was stated that the cost to the consumers of alcohol in the country was £123,000,000 a-year. It occurred to me that if the people of this country would apply for six years that expenditure to the liquidation of the Debt, the Debt would be entirely discharged at the end of that period. The whole of the National Debt could be so wiped out, and the whole of the £28,000,000 of annual charge in the shape of interest would be gone at once. There is no doubt, therefore, that this question of alcoholic revenue is one which lies very much at the bottom of our system of taxation. Upon this point I would mention one circumstance which in some of our debates is occasionally referred to. It is asserted that the Irish people have increased their consumption of spirits; that there is more drinking in Ireland, and that that proves the prosperity of the country. It is not true: the consumption of drink in Ireland has largely diminished, and is diminishing; and, therefore, I hope the argument I have referred to may not be used on future occasions. Well, now, I have made these remarks on the yielded revenue in order to defend myself, after a lapse of 12 months, from the charge which was brought against me by my critics. I think *The Times* accused me of being influenced by a cheerful optimism, which had no foundation, in assuming that the Revenue would be as I estimated. It has, in point of fact, turned out to be £700,000 better than that estimate of cheerful optimism. I do not know whether the present Chancellor of the Exchequer will be accused in his turn of dismal pessimism, which is obviously the spirit in which he looks at matters of this description. But, however that may be, the right hon. Gentleman has a very satisfactory surplus of £700,000 as regards the past year, and a Budget surplus amounting to something like £1,000,000. Now, I had estimates of revenue furnished me by the heads of the Departments, and I thought it right to make provision for the suspension of the two Sinking Funds, amounting to £800,000. But, whichever way that power was taken, if the Revenue, in point of fact, was more than I had expected, the increased sum would go to the benefit of the Debt. You either would not have suspended the Sinking Fund, or, if you did, then the surplus you possessed would, under the action of law, go to the reduction of the Debt. As I understand, in the course of the present year the provision for the liquidation of the Debt will have taken effect so as to discharge Debt to the full amount which was contemplated, quite apart from the suspension of the Sinking Fund. The surplus which has accrued upon the existing year will go in liquidation of the Debt. Is that not so?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; if the right hon. Gentleman had not suspended the Sinking Fund, he would have been bound to make provision for some surplus.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I was not alluding to what I should have had to do, but to what has been the result of the financial year. As I understand, there has been no diminution in the monies contributed to the reduction of Debt. In point of fact, the yield of revenue made it unnecessary to have made that provision. It having been unnecessary to make that provision, the surplus will practically go to make up the reduction of the Debt, so that, in fact, the Debt has been reduced this year to its full amount. That is the practical result. Now, I agree very much with what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer said upon the prospect of the Expenditure of this country. The real truth is that, though the Revenue is stagnant, the Expenditure is constantly increasing. I only hope that his appeals upon this subject may have a little more effect upon the side of the House on which he now sits than any we have been able to make on that subject. I quite agree it is not the fault so much of one Government or another, but it is the fault of the House of Commons in encouraging and pressing on an immense increase of expenditure. It is perfectly true that the Civil Service Expenditure—that is to say, the cost of the Civil Administration of the country—has not increased at all. Practically speaking, you are doing the whole work of this country, and doing a great deal more business than was done before in the Departments, for the same amount of money as formerly. There has been no increase at all. The large increase has been upon the education of the people. Well, we intended to make that increase, and it may be considered as a head apart. The other increase was one of policy on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I will not discuss whether it was right or wrong—I refer to the aid of local taxation. Now, if it operated as it was intended to operate, it would be merely a change from one form of taxation to another. But, I am afraid it has led to a great increase of expenditure, because the system has been such as to increase the extravagance of Local Authorities. I had experience of that at the Home Office. After all, it is not in the Civil Service Expenditure that you have any prospect whatever of reduction. You are not going to reduce your expenditure on education, that is certain; Gentlemen opposite are not going to reduce Expenditure in the form of contributions to local burdens; and they cannot reduce the expenditure on the Civil Administration of the Departments, because it has not increased. There is only one way in which the Expenditure of this country can be reduced, and that is by decrease in the Naval and Military Expenditure. Everybody knows that it is upon that expenditure that the enormous growth has taken place, and it is from that expenditure, and that expenditure alone, that the financial difficulties of the country spring. You have not suffered any diminution of revenue; all you have suffered from is from the increase of your expenditure; and what prospect is there of the House of Commons being relieved in that respect? I confess I see extremely little. The right hon. Gentleman must be a very sanguine man if he thinks that the increases which have been made are temporary. Why, what has he heard from Gentlemen who sit behind him which leads him to think that the increases are temporary? He has not had the pressure put upon him where he sits that was put upon us. I remember when the present First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) proposed from this Bench last year that there should be created Terminable Annuities of £2,000,000 for the purpose of Naval and Military Expenditure; and I remember that another noble and gallant Lord—the Member for Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford)—now in the Admiralty, proposed that £5,000,000 should be raised. Nobody was found on these Benches then to object to either of these proposals. The right hon. Gentleman is relieved a little from that pressure; but he has a number of hon. and gallant Gentlemen behind him who approve of large expenditure upon the Navy and Army. I see that a most elaborate demand is made by an hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite, the Member for Birkenhead (Sir Edward Hamley). The hon. and gallant Gentleman demands an enormous expenditure for the defence of the country. I looked through his lecture to see where the danger was to come from. There was a whole scheme for the defence of London against an invasion of England by Russia. Russia was coming from the Baltic—Russia, which hardly has an ocean-going man-of-war, was going to conquer the British Fleet in the Baltic, and to land an enormous force upon our shores. That was the reason for the hon. and gallant Gentleman's demand for an enormous expenditure. It is quite true that the expenditure on account of which we are suffering is due to what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer very properly and truly described as a newspaper scare. Well, so long as the House of Commons and the British public will allow itself to be made the victim of these newspaper scares, so long will the Expenditure of this country outrun the Revenue of the country. Now, I do not think it is at all a bad thing that the main pressure of this has fallen upon the payers of the Income Tax, because, as a class, the payers of the Income Tax are, if I may use a popular expression, the "Jingo class." They are the people who call for this expenditure. I do not believe that the mass of the people of this country desire this expenditure at all, but are really averse to it. There are, however, people who are demanding all sorts of other expenditure. I see day by day Members of Parliament desiring large additional expenditure. For instance, an hon. Member addresses a letter to the head of a Department, and then demands that it shall be printed as a Parliamentary Paper at the public expense. It is a most extraordinary proceeding, and why Government should consent to it, unless they are extremely desirous to be pressed into further expenditure, I cannot conceive. The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Henniker Heaton), who is apparently the dry nurse of the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), has undertaken to advocate every species of expenditure in that Department. I hope the Treasury will beware of the hon. Member for Canterbury. The fact is, the Post Office is not only an useful institution, but it contributes something as a good business to the alleviation of the public taxation; but since what I may call the period of extravagance commenced in 1881 the net profit from the Post Office has largely diminished. No doubt the receipts have increased, but the expenditure has increased in a greater ratio. In the year 1881, I think it was, the telegraphs paid their way. They did more than that—they paid within a few thousand pounds the interest upon capital expended. Now, the whole of that capital, amounting to £10,000,000 or £11,000,000 sterling, is written off as a bad debt. It does not pay a farthing, and you find that the telegraphs do not pay their way. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will furnish us with a Return of the Expenditure and Revenue of the Post Office in recent years. You cannot afford, in the present state of your Revenue, to play ducks and drakes with the revenue of the Post Office, and I shall always support the Chancellor of the Exchequer in resisting wild and foolish demands. Now, before I say anything as to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there are one or two things I should like him to give me some information upon. First of all, I should like to know what he proposes to do with regard to the Floating Debt which was increased by the Treasury Minute? I should like to know how, according to his view, the Floating Debt is to stand in reference to the increased power of issuing Treasury Bills which has been taken? There is another matter which I desire to mention before I go to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman, and on which I am rather sorry he has not said anything—the present state of the gold coinage. When I was in Office I was very strongly impressed with the seriousness of that matter. The state of our gold coinage is really a disgrace to the country. It has been neglected now for some 45 years, till at last its condition is shameful—I can use no other word—to a great commercial people like ourselves. I certainly had desired and intended to deal with the matter. I believe it would require a sum of £700,000 or £800,000 to put the gold coinage right now. I do not believe it is possible to act upon the principle which was contended for in 1843 by Sir Robert Peel, and with some modifications enforced—namely, throwing the loss upon the last holder. I do not believe that the people of this country would stand that at all. It was not done by Lord North, even under the pressure of circumstances at the time of the American War when our gold coinage was rectified. Another rectification of the gold coinage took place when Sir Isaac Newton was at the Mint, and it was also paid for by the State, and I believe you will in some form or other have to do that now. I cannot think that the present condition of the coinage can be allowed to continue much longer, and I should have been very glad if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had used some of his surplus in rectifying it. You may do it in several ways. You may either find all the money at once, which, after all, I think you ought to do, or if you do not do that you might spread it over by an annuity—a term of 10 or 20 years. There is a fund which ought to keep the coinage right once put straight, and that is the profits of the Mint upon seigniorage upon silver and gold. That fund is much larger now than it was before the change in the price of silver, I believe that that sum amounts to something like £30,000, and would be amply sufficient to keep the gold coinage right. I hope we are still going to be a country whose currency rests upon gold. I hope that as the Commission upon Fair Trade knocked that fallacy on the head, so the Commission on Bi-Metallism will dispose for ever of bimetallism. That is generally the result of Commissions of this character. Of course, if you are going to have bimetallism, it is no use putting the gold coinage right; it would not be worth while spending money on a coinage which was no longer to be your own. But if, as I hope, this country is going to keep its currency upon the basis of gold, it will not consent to have its currency so greatly debased as the present currency is. Upon the bimetallism question I feel very easy, because I think everybody admits that that is a folly we cannot commit without the co-operation of the rest of the world; and as Germany and France, and, I believe, other countries, have seen the enormous advantage which England has derived from its monetary system, and have determined to imitate it, they are not likely to turn their backs upon the system. Now, connected with this question there is another point which I should very much like to have information, or, at all events, the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon, and that is the employment of £1 notes. It is now a great many years since I had the advantage of ascertaining the opinion of Sir George Cornewall Lewis upon this subject. He could see no reason whatever why £1 notes should not be supplied as well as £5 notes, and why they should not be employed in England as well as in Scotland and Ireland. There has been a great deal of misconception upon this subject altogether. Some people expect enormous benefit from the circulation of £1 notes, while other people anticipate a very great danger. I think both opinions are over-stated. The advantages in a pecuniary sense to the Exchequer would not be as much as some people suppose, because the cost of putting and keeping them in circulation would be considerable, though I do not think there would be any need to go to the expensive methods adopted in the case of £5 notes. There is no question whatever that the circulation of £1 notes would save a certain amount of gold, which would be advantageous in the present condition of things; it would save a certain amount of wear and tear, which would be an advantage. But there is a much greater advantage than that—namely, the great convenience these notes would afford in the payment of wages, especially in cases where money has to be sent to distant parts, and where there is great difficulty in sending it. £1 notes would unquestionably be a great convenience under these circumstances, and what I venture to suggest to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is the possibility, without altering the present state of the currency, of having, instead of 1,000,000 £5 notes, 5,000,000 £1 notes, and thus ascertain what convenience would be afforded to the public. No possible harm could arise from the experiment. It seems to me an experiment which it would be extremely well worth trying. There is one other matter which I should like to mention to the right hon. Gentleman. I hope he will endeavour to do something in regard to the state of Public Accounts. If you endeavour now to discover, without the secret resources of the Treasury, what is the real expenditure upon a particular item, or what is the revenue derived from any particular item, you take up three or four separate accounts applying to the same matter, and you find a different figure given in each. You take up the Budget Statement to-night. That is founded upon Exchequer issues or Exchequer receipts. As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained, Exchequer receipts from the Income Tax are totally different from the actual receipts. You take up the Finance Account and the Appropriation Account; you take up this very useful book, *The Statistical Abstract*, and in reference to the same subject-matter you find a different figure in all. That is a most unsatisfactory state of things; and I hope some endeavour will be made to give one adjusted account. At present, I defy any ordinary mortal to ascertain what is the real Expenditure or Revenue of the country from the accounts as furnished by the Treasury in the Budget. There is one other matter in reference to these accounts in which I have taken considerable interest, and as to which I should like to know what progress has been made. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has pointed out how entirely deficient we are in anything like an accurate or true account of what has been spent on local advances. But there is another matter in regard to which our information is deficient, and that is the history of what has been done in successive years in the liquidation of Debt. My right hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock) procured a very valuable and interesting account, which goes back a certain number of years, in reference to the National Debt, and what has been done in regard to its liquidation. But that only goes back to 1874, and positively at this time we are without any authentic information as to what has been done with the Debt since 1815. I think such a Return might be made by the Treasury, so that the country might really have an authentic account showing what was the state of the Debt in each particular year, and what has been done year by year in respect of its liquidation. Really, the country ought not to be without such a statement as that. Now, the most important matter which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer brought before us to-night is the growth of Expenditure. The Expenditure in the year 1871, so short a time ago as that, was £68,000,000. In the year 1877 it was £77,000,000, and in the year 1887 it is £91,000,000. Now, that is really the history of the difficulty in which we find ourselves, and unless we are encouraged to do something towards decreasing this Expenditure we shall never get anything like a satisfactory reduction of taxation. The right hon. Gentleman finds himself with a surplus of £1,000,000, in spite of any increase of taxation. I would, first of all, observe that, with a surplus of £1,000,000, he could perfectly well have done all he proposed, except taking 1*d.* off the Income Tax. He could have reduced the Tobacco Duty; he could have made local loans to England and Scotland and Ireland; all that could have been done within the range of what I may call his natural surplus. The natural surplus is the surplus yielded by the existing taxation as compared with the proposed Expenditure. As regards the reduction of the Tobacco Duty, I think it is a very good thing. The raising of the Tobacco Duty by Sir Stafford Northcote, which, after all, was only effected for the purpose of expenditure on a policy which, we disapproved, was a scheme which we objected to at the time. We predicted that it would not be a successful measure. I believe it was very much resented, and I think it is quite time it was done away with, and I agree that what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes in this respect is a very good use to make of his natural surplus. As to the contribution towards Highway Rates, I do not desire to make any comment at the present time. But then the right hon. Gentleman, not content with disposing in this way of his natural surplus, proceeds to create an artificial surplus. Now, his first proposal is to transfer the Stamp Duty upon Railway Companies. I see no objection to that in principle; it was brought before me when I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the only reason I did not propose it was because I learned that some of the principal Railway Companies were greatly averse to it, especially the London and North Western Railway Company. I do not know whether that Company have changed their mind; but if not, and this is only a voluntary or optional scheme, it is not likely to produce a great deal of money. If the Railway Companies do not adopt the change there will not be any great result.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I look to an increase from the Debenture Stock.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I will reserve anything I have to say upon that subject until I have had an opportunity of inquiring a little further into it. Well, as regards local loans, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke as if he were making some new revelation to the world—that there were these local loans, which were, in point of fact, to be treated as assets in reduction of the Debt. That is a thing which everybody knows. It has been annually returned to Parliament. Now, I come to what is the right hon. Gentleman's main proposal, and upon that I must make this observation, that without treating it as a combative matter at all the proposal is an extremely simple one. It is to abandon the provision for the payment of the Debt to the extent of £2,000,000. That is what his proposal means. I remember the indignant comment of the Opposition Members of that day, when, under the pressure of peculiar circumstances, and owing to the demands of the War Office, we proposed temporarily to suspend even to the extent of £500,000 the provision for the payment of Debt. "Oh," it was said, "what bad finance this is." Well, at all events, we maintained the principle that, except under peculiar circumstances, there was to be an effort made for the liquidation of the Debt. Now, what does the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer do? He says—"No; we will permanently abandon the attempt to discharge the Debt, and instead of making the annual contribution to the discharge of Debt £7,000,000 we will make it £5,000,000." That may be a wise or an unwise operation; but it is a very serious operation, and in my opinion it is practically a fatal blow to any attempt to discharge Debt. Now, what is the pretence on which this is done? I wonder what would have been said if such a proposal had been made by us? Hon. Gentlemen opposite would have said—"These reckless Radicals care about nothing but diminishing taxation. They care nothing about the prudent provision that has been made for the redemption of the Debt." Well, I remember that when Sir Stafford Northcote originally made that proposal, enormous credit was taken for the provision which was to be made for the liquidation of the Debt. Here, however, we have a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer—I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman will forgive the title I give him; I may say I only give it him in a financial sense—making the first serious proposal for overthrowing the provision for the liquidation of the Debt. Now, mark what the argument is upon which he founds his proposal. He simply says—"Oh, circumstances are not exactly the same as they were. The difficulties now are greater than formerly. When we proposed to pay £28,000,000 a-year times were better, and now times are worse, and we will only pay £26,000,000." Another Chancellor of the Exchequer, who may come next year or the year after, may say—"Oh, times are not so good as they were; the pressure of taxation is very great, we will only pay £24,000,000 a-year." It is an argument which can be used by anybody at any time who wants to get rid of the burden of discharging Debt; and, therefore, I say this is a blow which is, in my opinion, absolutely fatal to the provision for the liquidation of the Debt. Of course, it is always popular with the payers of the Income Tax or payers of any other tax to say—"Oh, come what may, let us do something in relief of taxation." I only point out that there is nothing peculiar in this argument to the present situation. It is one which may be applied at any future time; and it is the greatest encouragement which any Chancellor of the Exchequer could possibly have given to that reckless expenditure of which the right hon. Gentleman has complained. It is the way to encourage and to find the means for this extravagant expenditure. The only check there is upon this expenditure is to make it felt in taxation. If you choose to make expenditure easy by this method, you may go on first of all by taking off £2,000,000 one year from the effort you are making to discharge Debt; you may take off £2,000,000 the next year, £2,000,000 the next, and so on, until you come to the point where you are only paying what you are obliged to pay. Then, when it seems you have got to the end of your resources, you may borrow, and so you may go on, having broken down the provision for the liquidation of the Debt which I consider one of the fundamental provisions of sound finance. I do not know what else is to be said beyond what the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told us in defence of his proposal to-night. I do not desire to enter at full length into this discussion. It is thoroughly well understood that on the first night of the Budget one only makes cursory remarks upon the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but I hope that when this question comes to be thoroughly debated in the House the full seriousness of this proposal and of its consequences will be understood. It is a totally different thing from a mere temporary suspension. You may describe it in this way—it is a permanent suspension of the Sinking Fund or the Fund for the discharge of Debt to the amount of £2,000,000, for the purpose of removing 1*d.* from the Income Tax. I should like to have seen 1*d.* or 2*d.* removed from the Income Tax by a very different process; not by giving up the efforts to discharge Debt, but by reducing the foolish and reckless extravagance of the country. I believe that if only people would come back to the principles of common sense, by which we were governed a few years ago, before the newspaper scares, we might reduce the Expenditure of this country, with perfect safety and with great advantage, by at least £4,000,000, and you might get rid of 2*d.* in the Income Tax by a process of that kind which would be quite satisfactory. But what is the course the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer recommends? That you should go on with this Expenditure, and that you should find the means for it by abandoning the efforts made for the discharge of Debt. Well, I am afraid that is a course which may have very serious consequences in the future, and I hope it may receive the careful attention of the House. I only rose for the purpose of making a few occasional remarks, if I may so call them, upon the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I have now only to congratulate him upon having so good a natural increment. But I wish he could have done what he proposes without sacrificing the provisions for the discharge of Debt.

Mr. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has done me the honour of referring to the remarks I made on the Budget Statement of last year. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the cheerful optimism by which it was said he was influenced; but I venture to say that he had not in his mind when he made his Budget Statement last year one great fact, and that was that there would be a change of Government. Now, Sir, if we look to figures, we notice that there is a dismal history of a gradually declining Revenue, quarter by quarter, for two years past, until the Conservative Government came into power, and then the minus quantity was changed into a plus quantity. [*Laughter.*] Right hon. Gentlemen opposite may laugh; but these are facts, and facts are, after all, what we are dealing with. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) has given us a Statement which, I am sure, must command the admiration of everybody. He has, on several points, introduced the germs of reform, which I hope he will carry much further when opportunity offers. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the system of redistribution of profits, and that system—I take it—is at the bottom of much of the present return to prosperity. Owners of a large quantity of capital have certainly suffered more than others; at the same time, there has been a great redistribution of that capital throughout the country. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman will find the principle of limited liability so successful as he expects, because I do not know that the profits of Companies always come to the shareholders. I think that, in many cases, it is the managers and others connected with Companies who get most of the profits. The right hon. Gentleman has struck a right chord when he speaks of the enormous evasion there is of taxation. It is in the methods of assessment, and in other matters obviating evasion, that I think there is a great deal to be done. Then, Sir, in regard to the Stamp reform, I think the right hon. Gentleman struck upon the right key; and I would point out that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) said that the estimated yield from the Stamp Duty was not sanguine enough. But, for the last three years, the result of the Stamp Duty has not been such as to create any great hopes in that direction. If we could find means of preventing evasion, I think the result might be better. I only regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not refer more to the reduction of Expenditure; but I hope that as the present Government feels its way, and feels confident of many years of power, it will effect that reduction of Expenditure which I understand is one of the main objects. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby spoke of foolish extravagance, and longed for the time when the country would come back to the rule of common sense. But he also let slip a remark that a great deal of the Expenditure began so recently as 1881, and we know what Government was in power at that time, and what Government, therefore—in the words of the right hon. Gentleman—was guilty of foolish extravagance, and what Government departed from the rule of common sense. I also desire to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that you cannot judge of the Expenditure by the absolute amounts. It must be taken relatively to the population and the needs of the country. It is a curious fact that the expenditure per head of the population is, I believe, the same to 1*d.* in this year as it was in the year 1861—namely, £2 9*s.* 11*d.* In respect to the expenditure on Naval and Military affairs, we must remember that our responsibilities have enormously increased, especially in regard to the over-sea trade. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made a Statement which I am sure will be very gratifying and satisfactory to the country. To take off 1*d.* of the Income Tax is a great triumph for any Chancellor of the Exchequer. The farmers will readily approve of his measure for modifying the Income Tax on their behalf. I could have wished the right hon. Gentleman, in dealing with the Tobacco Duty, had provided some definite scheme for allowing the Excise Duty on tobacco to be levied so that agriculturists, if they thought they could with advantage, might attempt to grow tobacco. But, Sir, I think the country will be satisfied, and more than satisfied, with the Statement which we have just heard. Many salutary reforms have been suggested; the Estimates are of a sober and safe character; but, above all, I am sure the country will see in this Statement a proof that it may thoroughly trust the capacity of the present Administration in all financial matters.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I hope the Committee will allow me to make a few observations on the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman. His Statement has been criticized by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt); but I do not think that his criticism will commend itself to the judgment of the country when the whole case is laid before the constituencies. I think this Budget must be described as one that, as much as any Budget in recent times, does justice to all classes of the community, and especially to those classes which are now suffering from the depression in trade and agriculture which afflicts all parts of the country. There is relief to be given to the payers of Income Tax; there is also some relief to the tenant farmers; and there is also that which every Member on this side of the House desires to afford—some protection for the working classes against the adulteration of what, to them, have been undoubtedly some of their most ordinary articles of consumption. It has been clearly proved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the working classes are injured by the adulteration of beer and tobacco; and I feel certain that when the proposals of the Government are known, it will be seen that the Government has been fully alive to the interests of the working classes in the country. But the reason why I rise is to call the attention of the Committee to the prominence given in the Statement of the right hon. Gentleman to local loans and the local Budgets of our towns. The question of local indebtedness has gradually forced itself upon the public attention; 20 years ago the subject received no attention whatever; but it is now becoming one of importance, and I am rejoiced to find that it occupies a commanding position in the Statement of the right hon. Gentleman. It has always appeared to me that local loans were as much a part of the indebtedness of the country as any of the obligations sanctioned by this House. There has been a tendency to increase the debts; and, although many local debts have been prudently incurred for purposes which are beneficial, still precautions ought to be taken with regard to the powers given to Local Authorities for the incurring of these debts. There is a just tendency in some respects among the residents in all localities to feel a pride in their own district, and perhaps to form an exaggerated idea of their importance. They look forward to the growth of population, which I am afraid, in many cases, experience will not justify. These debts are incurred for works the duration of which is often shorter than the time in which payment has to be made, and the result is that they become obsolete before the debt is paid off. Unless care is taken with reference to the powers given to Local Authorities to borrow money, I fear there will be other cases in which the money lent will be entirely lost. I do not wish to mention places by name, because the mention might give pain and prove injurious to the prosperity of the localities. My attention has been drawn to the subject, because I have the honour this year of serving on the Police and Sanitary Committee. It is our duty to examine all Bills laid upon the Table of the House for improvement of localities, and the short experience I have gained this year, in addition to what I formerly had, has confirmed me in the opinion that great care should be exercised in giving power to Local Authorities to incur debts, and that there should be supervision over the action of the Authorities in exercising the powers conferred upon them. I venture to say that if hon. Members will compare the Bills laid before our Committee with those laid before the House of Commons, as the result of our deliberations, they will find that the whole question of local indebtedness should be brought before the House, and it is on that ground that I rejoice to find that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has adopted the course he has indicated with regard to local loans. I do not mean to say that there are many cases where these debts are not most wisely incurred. It would be entirely impossible for our great towns, such as Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, and Bradford, to supply water, gas, and the other necessities of life to their vast populations without borrowing. Their borrowing powers have been exercised by these great towns with wisdom and prudence; and we have several proofs of the justice of what I venture to submit in the market prices of their securities. I beg to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the action he has taken in giving prominence to the question of local loans, and drawing attention to the subject; and I venture to say that the result of this discussion, and of the Bill which will be laid before Parliament, will be that the eye of the country will be brought to bear upon these local debts in a way which I believe will tend to future benefit. I am sorry that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not here at the moment. The right hon. Gentleman mentioned £4,000,000 as the amount of loss on these loans, and I hope he will be able to place on the Table of the House a list of those losses, and the reason why they have been incurred. Such a document would be of interest as a record, and also as a warning to Local Authorities as to how their borrowing powers should be exercised. There is one more remark I wish to make, and that is with reference to the payment to the Local Authorities of the proceeds of the Carriage Duties in aid of the rates. I am connected with the County Authorities in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in which, as hon. Gentlemen are aware, there are densely populated urban as well as rural districts. The country district is largely taxed in order to pay for the roads in towns; but the operation of this reform will be that the contribution will be made out of the Consolidated Fund of the country, to which all contribute, and that the inequality which is now so severely felt will no longer exist. I have one other remark to make, and that is with reference to the suspension or modification of the Sinking Fund. I believe myself that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman will not tend in any degree to destroy that Fund, but that, on the contrary, it will have additional firmness and efficiency. This is a time of exceptional character in our finance. We have a high rate of Income Tax; we have a large Expenditure; and we have, at the same time, a condition of unexampled depression. I am one of those who desire to see the continuance of the Sinking Fund for many years to come; and I believe that the way to secure that continuance is by modifying it in a time of pressure, the like of which, I believe, has not been known within the recent history of the country. I believe that, if you continue the Sinking Fund on its present scale during such a period, there will be a reaction of public feeling against the Fund which will weaken, and, perhaps, destroy it. On the contrary, by reducing the pressure at this exceptional period, I believe there will be a feeling in favour of the Fund which will lead to its having a permanent place in our financial arrangements, and that by its means, before long, a great impression will be made on the enormous Debt of the country. It is not a small matter, I think, in such times as these, that we should be paying off Debts to the extent of £5,000,000 a-year; and the opinions given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer are of such a character as to show that, if we persevere during the next quarter or half of the century in maintaining the Sinking Fund at the level which he suggests, there will be a great reduction in the National Debt, and we shall no longer stand before the world with a burden upon us which, in time of difficulty with other Powers, may be a great impediment to our progress, and greatly weaken our influence and authority amongst the nations of the world. I have no further observations to make with respect to the Financial Statement of the Government, except to repeat the expression of my opinion that the action which the right hon. Gentleman has taken will tend to check the increase of local indebtedness, and thus render a valuable service to the country.

Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): Sir, I would urge upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer the necessity of dealing with the gold coinage, which is admitted on all sides to be in a most unsatisfactory state. It is estimated that out of the £100,000,000 of gold in circulation in this country, at least £50,000,000 ought not to circulate at all, owing to the worn condition of the coins, which, according to the existing law, should be withdrawn from circulation, an operation that would inflict a loss of £150,000 on the last holders. The consequence of this condition of the coinage is that £10,000,000 sterling are lying idle in the hands of people in excess of their current requirements. This information is the result of an inquiry instituted two or three years ago by Mr. Martin, who sent circulars to bankers, asking what amount of gold they held in excess of current requirements. The highest figures came from Ireland, which is especially afflicted with light gold. There are several causes of the present condition of the gold coinage. There is the softness of the metal, to which I referred last year. Every important country but England uses a more durable form of gold—that is to say, 9-10ths fine, instead of our 11-12ths. The only country which used our standard—Russia—has abandoned it, and has adopted that of 9-10ths fine. I may mention that, under the late Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer promised to do what he could to restore the gold currency, and I should hope that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer would move in the same direction. When the restoration is effected, I believe that a good portion of the £10,000,000 I have referred to would find its way into the Bank of England, and that institution would be then able to discount at such a rate as would afford the necessary encouragement to our slightly reviving trade. Experiments have proved that coins of the standard of 9-10ths fine are much more durable than those of our standard of 11-12ths. The Master of the Mint expressed a hope, some time since, that he would be able to render the coinage more durable by coining under great pressure; but I have not heard what was the result of his endeavours, and I believe that the fact remains that our gold coins wear away to a greater extent than those of any other country. I believe the only use of 22-carat gold is to make wedding rings; but I believe that married women will tell us that those rings wear away quickly by reason of their being made of soft metal. Another cause of wear is the milled edge of the sovereign, which acts not only as a file upon the coins with which it comes in contact, but in that way contributes to its own destruction. Then there is the practice of bankers of shovelling up gold with steel-edged scoops, from which, as also from being brought into contact with the harder metal, copper, the coins suffer deterioration. Another, and, as I think, the chief cause of this deterioration, is our absurd system of coining free of charge. The object of that was to throw on the public the loss arising from the wear of the gold; but as that is no longer the practice, I do not see why a small charge should not be exacted. All other countries charge a seigniorage, and I am at a loss to understand why we should not do so also. The German Government have given every facility to their own people; they have introduced the French metrical system of weights and measures. They have imitated us by adopting a gold currency; but they have avoided our errors, and they have a coinage of harder metal, and without a milled edge. They also charge a percentage for seigniorage. The great advantage of charging a seigniorage of 2*d.* would be that our sovereigns would not be melted down to the extent they are at present. The goldsmiths would prefer to use bar-gold, rather than sovereigns, which cost them at the rate of £3 17*s.* 10½*d.* per ounce. Again, it is also known that travellers take many sovereigns out of the country, only the light portion of which is returned, because the sovereigns being worth the current price, they are melted down; and, further, we export large quantities to South America and the East, of which, although many are returned, a great number are recoined by foreign mints, those which are refused being used as a circulating medium at our expense. It is only full-weight sovereigns that are sent abroad, or are melted down; and the consequence is that our coinage continually depreciates, because of the survival not of the fittest, but of the most unfit. It is the heavy coins that are melted down, and the light ones that survive. It is a fact that, owing to our absurd system of gratuitous coinage of gold, that our coins are melted down to a greater extent than those of any other country. In the last report of the United States Mint there is a statement to the effect that over 2,000,000 of our sovereigns have been melted down in the

American Mints alone. I might also say that the United States Mint have a circulation of gold coins which have not lost, by fair wear and tear, more than one-half per cent in 20 years. I think if we were to adopt their system, and change the percentage of gold in our coins, making it 9-10ths fine gold, the coins would wear for 20 years, and by that means, allowing the advantage which we should derive to accumulate at compound interest, we should provide for our gold currency for 40 years. But in order to put our gold coinage into a proper position it would be necessary to incur an expenditure of from £600,000 to £800,000; and I am afraid that, in spite of the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—although he has advocated some of the matters which I pressed upon him last year — I do not think the present Chancellor of the Exchequer would like to find that £800,000 out of his surplus. Therefore, I would suggest that the money should be raised in a special way—that is to say, that the Treasury should issue against the Government balances at the Bank of England, £2,000,000 in £1 notes. We need not hold any gold against these notes, and they need not be a legal tender; but they could be received for taxes and stamps. They could be made payable at the Bank of England, and if they were not taken into the Bank—and I think they would only be a very few—the Bank could return them to the Mint or the Treasury—I think the Mint would be the best, as being more central. The notes could be accepted like cheques, and could be reissued. Two objections have been made to the issue of £1 notes. One objection is, that the expense would be very great. It has even been said that £1 notes would cost 6*d.* each; and it is also said that these notes, if largely availed of in this country, would give rise to a considerable amount of forgery. Now, I think I can dispose of these objections very shortly. Almost every country except ours have notes equivalent to £1, and even less. I have made a collection of 46 varieties of these notes, comprising Irish and Scotch, Canadian, Indian, and all well-made foreign notes; I have also read most detailed and reliable information with regard to the issue of these notes; and I may say that all this information is quite at the disposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I will quote a few extracts from the information I have, which will show how inexpensive and safe is the issue of these £1 notes. In Austria, the small notes cost about 1*d.* each, and forgery has been very rare. In Belgium, the cost is ½*d.* a-piece, and forgery is quite insignificant. In Canada, the cost is 1*d.* each, and forgeries have been few; in fact, there has been no difficulty on that score. In Denmark, the cost is ½*d.* a-piece, and forgeries are rare. In Germany, since the issue of small notes five years ago, there have been no forgeries. In Holland, the cost of the notes is 1¼*d.*, and forgeries are excessively rare. In India, the cost is two-thirds of a 1*d.*, and the loss from forgeries, which are very rare, is infinitesimal. In Ireland, one bank says—"No forgery for the last 20 years." In Norway, the cost is 1*d.* a-piece, the life of a note is five years, and there have been no forgeries. In Portugal, there was one attempted forgery eight years ago; but it was easily discovered. In Scotland, the notes cost 1*d.*, the life of the note is four years, and forgeries are rare. In Spain, the cost is 1*d.* per note, and forgeries are rare. In Switzerland, the notes cost a little more than 1*d.* each, their life is about eight years, and there are no forgeries. In the United States, the notes cost about ½*d.*, the life of the note is four years, and there are few forgeries. Therefore, taking the average, the cost of £1 notes ought not to exceed 1*d.*, and the life of a note ought to be about five years. What would be the result of the issue of these £1 notes? By the issue of these notes the Mint would receive probably £2,000,000 sterling in gold, of which £800,000 could be devoted to restoring our gold currency and placing it in a proper position, and £1,200,000 could be invested in Consols, which would yield £36,000 a-year. The cost would not amount to more than £2,000 for supplying the place of worn-out notes, and for an extra clerk or two to count the numbers. In that way you would have £34,000 left, which would be considerably more than would be necessary to enable you to keep up the gold coinage for all time. I should also like to say a few words about our silver currency, which is in a most wretched condition.

Our silver coins circulate at 50 per cent over their intrinsic value, because we issue the coin at 66*d.* per ounce, while the market price is from 41¾*d.* to 44*d.* I do not think it is fair for a country like this to ask the public to take what is worth intrinsically only about 13*s.* for £1. Moreover, I would point out that those who are in possession of a large quantity of silver coins always stand in some danger of loss from fire; because, if a serious fire occurred, although these people might recover the melted mass of silver, they would suffer a loss of about one-third of the value of the coins which would be melted down. Then there is also the certainty that if any action is taken by our Government to bring about an International Convention amongst the Great Powers to fix a ratio between gold and silver, we shall have to recast our entire circulation of silver. I do not recognize, in the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, an authority upon bi-metallism. His observations upon this matter show that, to some degree, he has got out of his depth; because, if we have a Convention with all the Great Powers to fix the ratio between silver and gold, our gold would not disappear, for there would be no place for it to go to; and I should think that, in spite of what has been said by the Marquess of Salisbury, that it would be unlikely that the Great Powers would consent. All that those who are in favour of bi-metallism ask, is that we should make the attempt to bring about such a Convention. We, who favour this system, firmly believe that if a Convention were held, every Great Power would be found willing to join in fixing a ratio; and all we want is, that they should fix three cardinal points—that it should be decided that each Power should be responsible for the coin it issues; that the Mint regulations should be identical with all these Powers; and that there should be an extra seigniorage of about 1*d.* per cent charged on silver. The public would not receive in this country any more silver than they required in the currency; and no one would necessarily know, if this system were carried out, that bi-metallism had been adopted. If we do not invite other Powers to join with us, we are likely to be prejudiced by the march of events elsewhere; because I believe that within a very short period—within the next 20 years—we shall find the great bulk of Foreign Powers on the Continent adopting bi-metallism. It was only through very exceptional circumstances that that system was altered. There is also this danger, that if silver, through our inaction, should fall to a much lower price than the present, and if our half-crown, which is now worth less than 1*s.* 8*d.*, should fall still further, I do not see what is to prevent imitations of our silver currency being made of good sterling silver. If these imitations were made, I would defy anybody in this House, or perhaps anybody out of it, to be able to detect the imitation coins and separate them from the coins issued by the Mint. Therefore, it is a desirable thing that we should consider, at any rate, the necessity of attending to our silver coin. I do not think I need speak further about silver; but I should like to say a few words now about our bronze currency—our copper. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has rendered it almost unnecessary for me to say much, because he has given effect to the intention of the late Government, at my instance, which was to prohibit the importation of foreign copper coins into this country; but I regret very much that he has imposed such a heavy loss on the working classes in the Regulation which he has just issued. I think there was no necessity for it. There should be a possibility of arranging the matter differently, for the evil is very widespread, owing to the delay which has taken place in adopting measures for dealing with this importation of foreign copper coins. A very large amount of this foreign copper has been circulated in this country in consequence of the neglect on the part of Her Majesty's Government. I mentioned, in a Question which I put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer a few weeks ago, that 20 per cent of the copper currency in the East of London was composed of foreign copper coin. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in answer to my Question, seemed to throw some doubt on the correctness of these figures. I may tell him that I received that information from two most reliable sources—namely, the Secretary to the Hospital Saturday Fund, and the Secretary to the North London Tramways Company. The Secretary of the Hospital Saturday Fund informed me that he received

£2,000 in copper, of which £400 was in foreign coin, and the Secretary of the North London Tramways Company has informed me that the Company receives £400 a-week in copper, of which £80 is in foreign coin. That was just the 20 per cent to which I alluded in my Question. From these two sources of information we get identical results; therefore we may take it for granted, I think, that my estimate is right—namely, that 20 per cent of the copper currency in the East of London is in foreign coin. To my mind, the best mode of dealing with that state of things would be this. It is not so much the loss that is caused by calling in the coins at 13 pence for the 1*s*., but it is that a great deal of our own copper coins could be circulated in the room of those foreign coins, and that it would be to the advantage of the State to increase such currency, because it yields a very large profit. I should think that during the past 20 years £1,750,000 in copper coins have been issued from the Mint. If 20 per cent of that copper currency is foreign, and we supply the place of that foreign coin by copper, turned out of our own Mint, the gain to the State will be £30,000. I think that if steps are not taken to absolutely prohibit the circulation of these coins, that this scare will pass over and foreign copper will still be received and circulated as before. I would suggest that the Mint should be empowered to exchange English copper coins for French copper to the amount of £5 at a discount of 5 per cent. The loss then would be very small, and in that way, in the course of a short time, our copper coin would take the place of foreign coin. And there would be a much better plan than that. If the Government were to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the subject of our currency, I am quite sure that they would find a sufficient number of bankers and merchants in the House who would interest themselves in the matter, and would give a very prompt decision upon it. To that Select Committee could be referred the question of decimal coinage, and the question of protecting our currency altogether. Perhaps, the Committee will be surprised to hear that there is not a single foreign country existing which has not a decimal coinage. We are left completely high and dry on this matter, and most of our Colonies with us. Some of our Colonies, such as Canada and Ceylon, have a decimal coinage; but this country remains in the singular position of not having introduced a system which prevails almost universally. This is not a new question; it was agitated over 20 years ago, and I took part in the agitation at that time.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member; but I must point out to him that he is now travelling altogether wide of the subject before the Committee in entering into the question of the decimal coinage.

MR. S. MONTAGU: I bow to your ruling, Sir; I will therefore only urge upon the Government the desirability of appointing a Select Committee to consider this question, and to endeavour to procure as perfect a currency as any other country existing; and I think the result of the appointment of such a Committee would be to facilitate commerce. As we are gradually losing our pre-eminence in commerce, I think it would be a desirable thing to encourage a sounder system through the Report of such a Select Committee, which would, I think, be favourable to a restored gold and silver currency.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. Montagu) has occupied a considerable portion of the valuable time of the Committee in discussing measures, which, though important in themselves, are not germane to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer; therefore, he will not think I am guilty of any want of respect if I do not follow him into those elaborate calculations as to the gold and silver and copper coinage of the country, which he has thought proper to make this evening. I would merely state this—that in common with the right hon. Gentleman opposite the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. [*Laughter.*] No, no, I mean the late Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, I deeply regret that the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has not found himself in a position to make some proposal to us with regard to the very dangerous quantity of light gold in the British currency. The matter has now reached such a pitch that I think delay in dealing with it will be positively dangerous. I had hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would have found himself in a position to make some proposal on the question. It is a matter that was carefully examined whilst I was at the Treasury, with the help of the officials; and I made certain that he would have found projects practically brought to a conclusion—that he would have found proposals drawn up in a definite form, and that he would have been able to bring them before the House. On that point, I may say that there are only two modes of dealing with our light gold currency in this country. There are only two ways in which you can deal with the light gold currency without putting an undue burden either upon the public generally, or penalizing the last holder. In the first place, we might abolish half-sovereigns, and re-place them by silver, the profit upon which would enable us to meet the deficiency caused by the light gold coinage. A far better way, however, would be by re-arranging the note issue by the Bank of England. The issue of notes by the Bank of England though, perhaps, a very safe one, is highly extravagant, and I think it would be possible, without running undue risk, to reduce the cost of the issue of these notes in such a way as to leave you a considerable balance—a balance which being funded would altogether meet the loss you might suffer by calling in the light gold. These are the only two methods by which you can call in the light gold coinage without throwing a burden upon the taxpayers, and without penalizing the last holder. I will, however, only reiterate my regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not been able to deal with this subject. I turn now to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. If I were to say what the impression left upon my mind after listening to the most interesting, most learned, and most exhaustive statement of the right hon. Gentleman is, I should say how great is the worldly worth of a reputation. I am perfectly certain if I had made a proposal of that kind—if I had had the misfortune to occupy the position he occupies, and had made such a proposal as that with which he has favoured us, I should have raised the indignation of every person in the country who considered himself sound and orthodox in all the doctrines of finance, and that such an amount of agitation would have been excited by learned persons, that the proposals I made would, in all probability, have been rejected by the House of Commons. I do not wish the Committee to understand, for one moment, that I am arguing that the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer are in themselves bad, I am sure they are good; but I am only saying that they are not proposals which would have been accepted from me, and for several reasons which I will endeavour to show. But before I examine these proposals, I may allude to a remark which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer made with regard to the Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure in the last year's accounts and the Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure as estimated in this year's accounts. As the Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure in this year's accounts, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was good enough to contribute some credit to myself; but I cannot accept that credit from him; because I consider that the whole Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure in this year's accounts is entirely due to his own action with regard to the claim of the Egyptian Government against this Government in respect of the expenses connected with the defence of the Egyptian Frontier. The right hon. Gentleman was able, practically, to save this country some £500,000 by the attitude he took up as to these claims, and that £500,000 absorbs nearly the whole £700,000 which is the whole of the Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure in this year's accounts. Therefore, I must attribute to him all the credit for this saving, and as a member of the taxpaying public I congratulate him upon having been able to overcome the prejudices of the Foreign Office, which I found absolutely insuperable upon that point. I now turn to the Estimate of the Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure for the coming year, which is something like £700,000 as the right hon. Gentleman has stated it. That, I think, is greatly due to the reductions which we made in the Estimates of the Navy Expenditure before I left the Government, and in those of the Army Expenditure since I left the Government. A sum of £180,000 is charged off the Army Expenditure since I left the Government, and £500,000 were charged off the Navy Estimates before I left the Government, which almost exactly accounts for the Surplus of Revenue over Expenditure as estimated for the coming year. If the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer desires to repeat the compliment he paid me with regard to the amount of reduction effected in the Expenditure before I left the Government, I shall not repudiate the compliment as I did the other to which I referred, to which I did not consider myself entitled. With regard to the Estimate for the coming year, there is one point which strikes me as remarkable, and upon which I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for some future information. The right hon. Gentleman took the Customs for the coming year at £20,200,000, which is an increase of £45,000 on the past year. The increase under that head on the Estimate in the past year amounted to something like £250,000; and I do not understand why the Customs should be estimated this year to produce so small an increase as £45,000. I thought that, as far as foreign spirits were concerned, it was a rising revenue. I should be surprised to think that the right hon. Gentleman has under-estimated the Customs to a considerable extent. That is not an important matter; but I now come to the question of the Excise. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer estimates the Excise revenue at £29,292,000, which is an increase of £40,000 over last year. I do not know where he hopes to get it. The Excise last year fell off by over £400,000, and fell off the year before over £300,000. The Excise revenue is largely and steadily decreasing; and I do not know to what cause to attribute it. Personally, I believe it to be due to the cause of temperance.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I do not wish to interrupt the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington; but I desire to say that the estimated increase under the head of Excise is entirely due to an estimated increase in the consumption of beer.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I heard that, and I was going to allude to it. It is quite true that the right hon. Gentleman expects to get £130,000, owing to a certain action which is about to be taken with regard to the adulteration of beer; but I want to point out that the Excise last year lost £400,000, and that this year it has lost an almost equal amount of money. That is a very large decrease, and this £130,000 increase which he anticipates does not seem to me to be justified. I wish to know upon what the right hon. Gentleman relies to justify the anticipated increase in the Revenue under the head of Excise. I only allude to this point for the purpose of getting information, and not for the purpose of throwing doubt upon the Estimate of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Generally speaking, I believe I am right in saying that Chancellors of the Exchequer are very apt to put an immense pressure upon the permanent officials to crack up their Estimates. I know that these officials feel that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his great anxiety to show a satisfactory balance, puts on them greater responsibility than they ought to bear, and is very much indisposed to accept from those officials their view of the Estimates of Revenue which they think suitable to the occasion. The general effect of the pressure put upon the officials is to induce them to add a little to their Estimate, so as to produce a result which is very often not realized. I do not believe for a moment that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken that course; but it is one of which I think Parliament ought to be reminded, and against which Chancellors of the Exchequer ought to bring their influence to bear. I now come to a matter which interests me more than anything else at this moment, but which, unfortunately, I am not able to take as strong a line of action with regard to as I should like, on account of the very grave political issues that are before Parliament and the country. Any strong action upon the points to which I refer might possibly interfere with those vital issues. It was with the utmost regret that, after listening to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night for nearly three hours, that I came to the conclusion that he has not said one word on the subject of economy and retrenchment. I cannot say how much I regret that. I may say that never did a Chancellor of the Exchequer more capable, more qualified, or possessing more power to deal with such a question, join any Government with a more justly earned and overwhelming financial reputation, and the right hon. Gentleman had only to say—"*sic volo, sic jubeo,*" for Her Majesty's Government could not afford to quarrel with another Chancellor of the Exchequer. But what, in point of fact, is the real state of the case? The right hon. Gentleman, in the course of the Financial Statement he has just made to the House, seemed to review with much greater care the Civil Service Estimates than those of the Army and Navy; and he seemed also to suggest that a reduction might be made in that quarter much more effectually than in the case of the Army and Navy. Now, Sir, I entirely disagree with that view. I believe there are reductions that could possibly be effected in the Civil Service; but I should not put the amount of that reduction at more than £100,000. I am afraid that, in what I am about to say, I may give offence to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield (Mr. Mundella); but I am, at the same time, bound to say that I look with great suspicion on the Education Vote. And why? The reason is this—the Chancellor of the Exchequer comes down to this House year after year and deplores the increase of expenditure on first one subject and then another; but he invariably congratulates the House and the country on the increase that has taken place in the Education Vote. Now, Sir, I think there is a great danger in this. The mere fact that the House and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are always disposed to take what I may call a gushing position over any increase in the expenditure on Education is, I hold, an encouragement to that Department not to exercise so rigid an economy as would otherwise be the case. All I want upon this, as well as on other matters, is that the country should get full value for the amount it is called upon to pay; and I now propose to tell the House of one Department which requires to be overhauled, because it is spending a good deal too much money, without affording any adequate return in the shape of value—and that is the Department of Science and Art. I now come to speak of the Army and Navy; and with regard to those Services, I regret to say that the view I took of the expenditure to be made upon them is not that which has been adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. What I found was this—that between the years 1883 and 1885, there had been a total gross increase in the average annual expenditure on the Army and Navy of no less than £6,000,000 sterling. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer never alluded to the growth of this increase; all he referred to was that increase in Army and Navy Expenditure, which was due to what he called the "naval scare" of 1884; but I assert that the increase due to that scare does not account for the large annual increase of £6,000,000, nor for one half of it. The fact is, that the naval scare accounted for an increase last year, and this year, of about £2,700,000—you cannot put it higher than that — leaving as much as £3,000,000 unaccounted for. This, Sir, is a point to which I desire to direct attention. I should like to know what are the circumstances--domestic or foreign—which have caused an increase in the cost of the Army and Navy since the year 1883 to the extent of £3,000,000 of money? That is a matter on which I should live to have the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is of no use for the right hon. Gentleman to lecture the House about the expenditure on the Civil Service Department, and on the tendency of hon. Members to make proposals, the effect of which will be to increase in various ways the cost of the Public Service. What he has to do is this—if he believes an increase to be necessary in a great Public Department, he ought to place that on the taxes of the country. If the right hon. Gentleman does that, and convinces the country that it is necessary, and the taxes are raised for the purpose, then the great body of the taxpayers will begin to feel the pinch, and will put pressure on their Representatives that they may endeavour to obtain a reduction of expenditure; and the moment they begin to feel and to assert the necessity of being economic, Parliament will cease making proposals to the Chancellor of the Exchequer whereby the expenditure is increased. But so long as the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not put this extra expenditure on the taxation of the country, but contrives, by one financial method or another, to conceal it from the country, so long will he be enabled to accuse Parliament of increasing the cost of the Public Service. It is from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the reduction must really come. That is the only way in which we can make sure of obtaining retrenchment. But we are told that economy is very unpopular—that the people of this country like to know they have a strong Army and a large Navy, with all the requisite coaling stations and fortifications. If this be said, all I say is, test it. Place the cost of these things on the taxation of the country. There is, as I have explained, a large gross annual increase in the expenditure for the Army and Navy. Has the Chancellor of the Exchequer placed that upon the taxes? No; he has not. What he has done is this—he has manufactured a surplus by reducing the repayment of the capital of the National Debt. I, for one, do not believe that his proposals will do much good. Indeed, I do not believe it is his Budget; nothing will induce me to believe it. It is a Budget that has been made for him, partly by general political circumstances and partly by the persuasions—I will not call them the prejudices—of the Colleagues with whom he has to deal. In not having placed the cost of the increase in our armaments on the general taxes of the country, I say the right hon. Gentleman has done an injury to the cause of economy and retrenchment. The right hon. Gentleman has, as I have stated, dealt with the National Debt; and upon that subject what I have to say is this—I believe that large operations are not only possible, but desirable, with regard to our arrangements for the repayment of the National Debt; but I wish also to point out that the £6,000,000 which are annually devoted to the repayment of that Debt constitute a tremendous financial reserve, and may be said to be a powerful weapon which every Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to guard, as if it were the apple of his eye, in order that it may only be resorted to in real cases of emergency. What I protest against is the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman to take the £2,000,000 he has fixed upon from the repayment of the National Debt, and applying the amount so taken in order to meet the increased expenditure on armaments, which, supposing them to be justified or desired by the country, ought to have been placed on the taxes of the country. This, Sir, is a point on which I feel most strongly. To me it seems that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had three possible Budgets before him. In the first place, he might have left matters exactly where they were, in which case he would have had a surplus of £900,000—a surplus by no means too large for the Public Service of the country — or he might, in the next place, have suspended the little Sinking Fund of £800,000, in which case he would have been left with a surplus of £1,700,000; and with a little alteration in the taxes he would have had a surplus of £1,800,000 or £1,900,000, and then, with the aid of that, he could have taken 1*d.* off the Income Tax. But the Budget the right hon. Gentleman has selected—and here I venture to tell him what is my firm opinion—is a most unfortunate one. Really, if I were to choose between the two—and I am sure that no one will suspect me of admiration, political or otherwise, for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—I must say that I should greatly prefer the right hon. Gentleman's Budget of last year to the Budget that has been brought forward by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. I regret—more than I can express—that the great principle of the repayment of the National Debt has been interfered with for so light, so trivial, and so unsound a cause. I regret that a great weapon has been tampered with, blunted, and spoiled for future use in a period of emergency. I do not know whether it would be possible for the right hon. Gentleman at the present moment to reconsider his Budget; but whether that be so or not, I am quite certain of this—that he has put out of court all the financial principles in which he has been trained, which he has heretofore proclaimed, and which he hoped, when he acceded to Office, he would be able to impress upon Parliament and the country. There is one more point on which I ought to make a remark. I protest very strongly against any further relief, such as is now proposed in the shape of dole and contribution on the part of the right hon. Gentleman, towards the local rates. I consider that that principle of contribution to the local rates in the form in which it is at present carried out to be destructive of economy in every shape. And besides that, it is very objectionable from another point of view. There is at the present moment a strong Party in the country, by no means confined to this side of the House, who are, if not averse to, at any rate not very anxious for, a large reform of local government. Their reluctance on that point I can understand; but it is a reluctance which must be got over. This question will have to be dealt with, and a large and genuinely-popular system of local government must be made to take the place of that which now exists. The only hope on the part of the Government and of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is to overcome the reluctance which, as I have said, exists so strongly in regard to this matter among certain classes in the country. The right hon. Gentleman has, I think, materially weakened the position the Government occupy directly by giving the proposed dole of £250,000, and indirectly because the class to which I have referred will be thereby encouraged in their resistance to local government reform. They will say—"If you will only put it off; if you will stubbornly oppose all reforms of local government, year after year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be obliged to give us something more from the Imperial funds." I hold that the large contribution proposed to be made in aid of the local rates is not only most unfortunate, from an economical point of view, but has also added to the great difficulties the Government must necessarily have to encounter in dealing with the question of the reform of local government in this country. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will believe that in making these remarks I have been actuated by no feeling of hostility or animosity towards him or the Government. What I say is, that I consider finance as a question which ought to be removed above all mere matters of a Party kind. I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman will receive from hon. Members who represent the counties, and from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin), the most profuse thanks for the proposal he has made. But, at the same time, I cannot but think that these are not the only quarters to which the right hon. Gentleman ought to look for applause in financial matters. I should have thought the right hon. Gentleman would have preferred to have taught a better lesson in finance to the Party he has so gallantly and so disinterestedly come forward to aid than that which he has put before them this evening. I will not, on this occasion, trust myself to say more. I do not desire to be dragged into a position of acute animosity or hostility to the Government; but I must own that I was so much disappointed with the Financial Statement of the right hon. Gentleman that I could not refrain from expressing to the House the view I entertain that the cause of economy has not been strengthened, but rather that the cause of retrenchment has been put back by the financial policy which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has just announced.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The Committee has enjoyed the exceptional advantage during this discussion of the presence of no fewer than four Gentlemen, each of whom has been, or is at the present moment, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Three of those Gentlemen have addressed the Committee on this occasion, and it is only natural that they should entertain considerable differences of opinion. The noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) who has just spoken, and who has told us he has been actuated by no feeling of hostility to the Government or my right hon. Friend (Mr. Goschen), has addressed to the Committee a speech which has evoked the plaudits of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. Whatever his desire, the noble Lord has certainly succeeded in criticizing the proposals of my right hon. Friend with great severity; but, so far as my humble and uninstructed judgment enables me to see, I believe that the Budget proposals that have been put forward by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer this evening are such as well be found fairly acceptable and popular—both in this House and in the country. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) has questioned the fact of the existing depression throughout the country, and has spoken of it as an assumed or asserted depression. I cannot say anything with regard to what may be the case in commercial circles; but, with regard to the condition of agriculture, I am in a position to speak positively, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that if he believes the existing agricultural depression to be either assumed or asserted, he is labouring under a complete delusion. There is no question at all about it. At the present moment, agricultural depression is a very real, a very palpable, and a very lamentable fact, and is producing great loss and suffering among the classes who are directly concerned. It was for this reason that I heard with great pleasure and satisfaction the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night, because it gives evidence of a friendly recognition of the extreme difficulty of the situation in which those classes are placed who are suffering from this depression at the present time. The proposal of my right hon. Friend with regard to the payment of Income Tax by the tenant farmers is, I think, a very desirable and very useful one, and will be regarded by the farmers of the country as a boon for which they will be grateful. For some years past—and particularly during the last year—the profits of the farmers have amounted to nothing at all. I venture to differ from my noble Friend in regard to the contribution the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to give in aid of the local rates. The tendency of the noble Lord's remarks has been, I think, to convey an impression which I do not think exists in the mind of the noble Lord, that he is altogether wanting in that sympathy for the agricultural interest which has been so much manifested by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night. With regard to the objection put forward by the noble Lord as to this proposal impeding in any way the local government reforms contemplated by Her Majesty's Government, I must say that I do not think there was much force in that objection. After all, what is the amount of relief it is proposed to concede? Speaking as a Representative of the agricultural interest, I may say that, although the amount of that relief is of no value in itself, I value it for this reason—that it is evidence of the good intentions of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the Government which he represents. I deny that the effect of this contribution on the part of the right hon. Gentleman will be likely, as the noble Lord has stated, seriously to impede or interfere with the great reform in local government, which I believe to be so much desired both by Her Majesty's Government and by the country at large. Sir, I wish to refer to one other matter which was mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the Currency Commission and to the question of bi-metallism, and he spoke in somewhat strong terms. I never had the slightest suspicion until to-night that the right hon. Gentleman was what would be termed in America such an out-and-out gold bug as he is. After the observations he has addressed to the Committee, I have no doubt upon that head. I do not wish, on this occasion, to enter into any of the details of the most complicated and intricate question of bi-metallism; but I do desire to say this—that when the right hon. Gentleman speaks, as he did speak to-night, of other countries in Europe, and I think also of the United States——

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I did not mention the United States.

Mr. CHAPLIN: Anyhow, he spoke of Germany and France, and he pronounced the opinion that both of those countries were absolutely opposed to any change in the direction of bi-metallism. I do not care to express a positive opinion; but I think it is very probable, indeed, that in making that assertion the right hon. Gentleman was quite as much mistaken as he is very often on other matters. Sir, I have only to say further, that after criticizing, as I say with great severity, the actual Budget laid before the House, the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) spoke of three Budgets, any one of which might have been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I can only regret that, with all the advantages he had, and with all the opportunities he had before him, the noble Lord did not think it right to introduce a Budget of his own. If he had done that, he would have had an opportunity of correcting all the great errors of which he complains, and of submitting to the House a project and policy he evidently approves of so much, and which, according to his view, would have conferred so much benefit upon the country. Before I conclude, I desire, in spite of the sneers which were directed at me by those who represent the agricultural interest, to tender, on behalf of that interest, my cordial and grateful acknowledgments to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the proposals he has made and for the sympathy he has shown towards that interest, which I believe is, at the present time, more suffering than any other interest in the country.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Mr. Courtney, I congratulate hon. Gentlemen opposite in having two distinct financial policies, advocated by two prominent Leaders of their Party. Whatever views hon. Gentleman opposite may take of this Budget, or of finance generally, they will have no severance of Party ties in expressing their views. But the real difference of opinion between the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), may be summed up in one sentence. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer recognizes, that in the present state of depression of agriculture and of commerce, and in face of the present want of elasticity in the ordinary Revenue, he is not justified in imposing an 8*d.* Income Tax. The noble Lord is clearly of the same opinion; but he thinks that the difference between a 7*d.* and an 8*d.* Income Tax should be met by a reduction in Expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks the difference should be provided for by ceasing to pay off the National Debt. Now, I very cordially sympathize with the view of the noble Lord. I believe that the *crux* of this question—we may go round and round the question as much as we like—but the real *crux* of this question is in the National Expenditure. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not put the case at all too strongly, when he pointed out the very unsatisfactory state of the ordinary Revenue. *The Economist* showed, last week, that in the two periods of five years, from 1877 to 1882 and from 1882 to 1887, there was not a difference of £50,000 in the Revenue from Customs and Excise. This practically shows that the Customs and Excise are a decreasing source of Revenue, and that extra expenditure, whatever it may be, that this House determines to indulge in, has been found, and will have to be found by means of the Income Tax. I am going to trouble the Committee with two or three figures. I do apologize for doing so, because I think the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington has opened up the question; and it is a question upon which we must continue to discuss, till we make some impression upon the minds of the public—I mean the question of the Army and Navy Expenditure. We get very much confused by mixing up extraordinary Expenditure, Votes of Credit, and other War Expenditure from time to time, without watching as the noble Lord has done the regular increase of the normal Peace Expenditure. Now I got a Return laid before the House last year which actually shows the normal Naval and Military Expenditure for the last 10 years. If the House will bear with me I should like to give in round figures what the Expenditure has been. In 1876 it was £24,800,000; in 1877, £25,400,000; in 1878, £25,000,000; in 1879, £25,700,000; in 1880, £25,200,000; in 1881, £24,600,000; in 1882, £25,000,000; in 1883, £25,300,000; in 1884, £26,400,000; in 1885, £26,600,000; and, for the first time, I suppose, in the history of this country, in a time of peace, in 1886 it reached £30,120,000; and, according to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the expenditure upon the Army and Navy Services during the last year (1887) was about £31,000,000; and the Estimate of the expenditure in the forthcoming year is again £31,000,000. So practically what we have got, as the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington very correctly stated, is a normal increase of expenditure of between £3,000,000 and £4,000,000, and that totally irrespective of extra expenditure. Well, now, it is not only the amount of this expenditure, but the nature of the items of which it is made up, that objection is taken. We know what the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope) will say. They will say this expenditure is absolutely necessary in order that the country may be in a proper state of defence. [*Cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite cheer that. I have no doubt that if the expenditure were £40,000,000 or £50,000,000 hon. Gentlemen would cheer. But one point I wish to bring before the Committee is this—not only is this expenditure steadily increasing, but we are not getting money's worth for our money. We are paying 30*s.* in the pound. We have a large amount of useless expenditure. Take one point alone—the Non-Effective Services. I shall be very surprised if before long the public does not take a serious and perhaps unpleasant view of the expenditure on this particular head. The expenditure on the Non-Effective Services of the Army has reached £3,500,000, that on the Non-Effective Services of the Navy has reached £1,750,000, and that on the Non-Effective Civil Services has reached £1,500,000. We are practically paying £6,750,000 a-year in pensions, and of that sum more than £5,000,000 is paid out of the £30,000,000 spent on the Army and Navy. I am not going to say that men who have spent their lives in the service of the Crown, either in the Navy or Army, should not be properly pensioned; but I maintain that you are establishing and carrying out a system now whereby you are pensioning a large number of men under 50 years of age. A Return was placed on the Table of the House the other day of the total cost of pensions for officers in the Army alone. In 1855 it was £504,000; in 1870, £567,000; in 1880, £1,110,000; in 1885, £1,300,000. We have had a succession of Royal Warrants. I tried the other day to extract from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War what was the financial effect of the last Royal Warrant with reference to Army promotion. I asked him to lay a Paper on the Table showing what the result would be. He has not done so, and I have very little doubt that there is practically no financial saving effected by that operation. The House and the country ought to understand what they are getting for their money—what it has cost to create this flow of promotion. What would be said if the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to come down to the House and say—"There are a number of distinguished Gentlemen at the Bar who are in possession of all the patronage and income of the Bar. Seeing there is a large number of Gentlemen behind them who wish to step into the shoes of these distinguished gentlemen, it is most desirable the latter should be pensioned off in order to create a flow of promotion in the Legal Profession?" We have heard complaints over and over again that men in the Army are set aside at the very time of life when they have the greatest experience. There is no such military Non-Effective Service in the world as ours. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington has alluded to the Royal Commission which is sitting on Expenditure. I think the country is greatly indebted to him for issuing the Commission; but I deplore the terms in which the reference to the Commission was couched. The Commission will be absolutely powerless to deal with the real spending Departments of the Army and Navy. It may effect reductions in the clerks at the War Office and the Admiralty; but it cannot deal with the really large expenditure, the expenditure of administration. I draw a distinction between policy and administration. Policy is a question for the responsible Government of the day. It is their business to say whether there should be an army of 150,000 men or of 130,000 men. But what I should like the Commission to inquire into is, whether the Army, whatever it is, is costing more than it ought to cost. I am a Member of the Commission, and I was astonished to learn that the medical staff of our Army in time of peace is costing nearly £350,000 per annum. I wished to inquire into this expenditure, but I was entirely precluded from doing so by the terms of the Reference. If the Royal Commission had been able to go into such points as this, it would have shown that our Army is the most expensive army in the world, though we have comparatively few men. So much for that branch of the question. I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the

Civil Service is exceedingly well managed, and I think it cannot be carried on at much less cost. I differ from the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington so far as the expenditure on Education is concerned. I am delighted to see it increased, though I share his view as to whether we are getting the money's worth in the case of all the items. At the same time, we must rejoice in the fact that our net expenditure for Education is steadily increasing, and that the expenditure for our Civil Administration is stationary. The real increase is in the Army and Navy, and also in those grants in aid of local taxation as to which I desire to say a word or two directly. I should like to allude to one or two proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I quite approve of the alteration he proposes to make with reference to increasing the duty upon the transfer of the Railway Debenture Stock; but I would ask him whether he does not think there is a very large amount of property, dealt with on the Stock Exchange, which never pays any duty at all; whether it would not be possible to make time bargains, contracts for stocks which are never delivered, but which are re-sold on and on—a source of an effective contribution to the Revenue. With reference to the initial duty of 1*s.* per £100, I doubt whether the great Companies will consent to the change proposed. I understand the change to be entirely optional; that if the Companies do not choose to avail themselves of it the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take no action. But there are two main features of the Budget. By the local Budget the money of the Public Works Loan Commission is dealt with, and I regret that the country is to sustain a loss by what is proposed.

MR. GOSCHEN: There is no loss.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that there would be an apparent loss of £300,000; that instead of receiving £900,000 and paying away £600,000——

MR. GOSCHEN: There is an apparent loss. The matter is rather complicated; but I assure the right hon. Gentleman we do not forego one shilling of advantage by our proposal.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I am exceedingly glad to hear that; but I may throw out the suggestion. Does the right hon. Gentleman not think this ought to have been an occasion of making a profit—I mean a large and considerable profit? I think that if Local Authorities are enabled to borrow on the security of the State they ought to pay for the accommodation—if £30,000,000, £40,000,000, or £50,000,000 sterling is funded in a Public Works Budget, the State ought to have some margin of profit.

MR. GOSCHEN: It is impossible to alter bargains which have already been made. You cannot, in constituting a Local Loans Budget, increase the amount of interest which is to be paid by Local Authorities. If the right hon. Gentleman will assist us in future in insisting upon reasonably profitable terms, I shall be extremely obliged to him; but I could not, in framing a Local Budget, increase the charges so as to secure an additional Revenue.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: It is only within very recent times that the principle of lending at low rates has been introduced. I will cordially support him in every attempt to prevent any advantage being taken of the State. Now, Sir, with reference to the appropriation of the surplus. I want to say a word or two about the contributions in aid of local rates. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has thrown this boon apparently and really to the agricultural interest, and as such the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Chaplin) has just accepted it. But I must point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the great increase of local taxation, about which so much complaint is now made, is an increase in the urban and Metropolitan districts. During the last 10 years there has been hardly any increase in local taxation in rural districts, notwithstanding all the complaints we hear about the amount of this taxation. The last Report of the Local Government Board puts the increase in 10 years, in the Metropolis at 59 per cent, in the urban districts at 52 per cent, and in the exclusively rural districts at £188,000, or something like 11 per cent. The whole of the £250,000 which the right hon.

Gentleman is proposing to vote towards the repair of roads, will go into the hands of the Rural Authorities. The towns will benefit to a very small extent. The entire amount which was given last year to boroughs having separate Courts of Quarter Sessions was only £5,800, and the entire amount given to the Metropolis was £1,731. If you are to have any contribution towards local taxation, you ought to share it fairly amongst all locally taxed bodies. The amount of rates levied in the pound constitutes a fair claim on the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will adopt—I am sorry he has adopted it—this extravagant mode of subvention of local rates. I maintain that the people who have a right to complain of the gross injustice of the present mode of levying local taxation, levying it on one description of property, and one description of property alone, are the residents in the towns. The average rate in rural districts is little over 2*s.* in the pound, whereas in towns it is 5*s.*, 6*s.*, 7*s.*, and 8*s.* in the pound; and the residents in towns are subjected to this heavy taxation levied on one description of property only. It has suggested itself to my mind that the Committee should remember, in dealing with the financial condition of the country, that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is asking for an Imperial taxation of £76,000,000; and that in addition to that there is a local taxation of £25,000,000—practically the amount annually raised by taxation in this country is over £100,000,000. Now, with reference to the proposal for stopping the payment of the National Debt. I am not going to follow in the footsteps of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, who has put the case very clearly before the Committee and the country. The proposition is one on which, no doubt, a great deal of discussion will take place; and the only remark I have to make will be in reference to the criticism the right hon. Gentleman made in contrasting two periods—that of Sir Stafford Northcote in 1874-5, and that of his own Chancellorship in 1876-7. No doubt the periods are essentially different. If the prosperity of 1874-5 has passed away, that, surely, is no reason for increasing our Expenditure so many millions beyond what it was at that time. I should like to strengthen the hands of the right hon. Gentleman with reference to the application made to him with regard to the Post Office. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby has shown that the Post Office revenue is a steadily decreasing revenue. In 1883, the Post Office revenue amounted to £3,200,000. It has now got considerably under £3,000,000, and I think the Budget of to-day shows a still greater reduction. When propositions are made for increased expenditure in the Post Office, the House and the country should understand that they amount to propositions for increased taxation. There is only one other subject to which I wish to allude, and that is the subject of the Death Duties. I very much regret the right hon. Gentleman has not taken the opportunity of dealing with these duties. Two years ago, my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) proposed to deal with the Death Duties; to put them upon a just and equitable basis affecting all descriptions of property. That question was fairly thrashed out, all the machinery and all the figures are available, and I think it would have been quite as easy to have dealt with the Death Duties as to have dealt with the arrangements in respect to the repayment of the National Debt. Now that the right hon. Gentleman has postponed the consideration of the Death Duties for another year, I desire to ask him to consider whether he does not think the time has arrived when there might not only be an extension of the area over which the Death Duties are levied, but also a simplification of the principle on which they are levied; and I think it would be far better if we could have one uniform rate levied upon property at death. We should thus get rid of the difficulty of long reversions, and we should get rid of the distinctions or differences of rates. Now that we have seen a Chancellor of the Exchequer bold enough to suspend the repayment of the National Debt, I think we need not despair of having a Chancellor of the Exchequer who will have the courage to deal with the Death Duties upon a broad principle. A Chancellor of the Exchequer who does this will, I think, find resources which will enable him to carry out many of those reforms which we all desire to see accomplished. I have only to say, in conclusion, that although I have been compelled to differ from the right hon. Gentleman, perhaps he will allow me to express my unfeigned admiration of the great ability and masterly power with which for three hours he engaged the attention of the Committee. Whether we agree with him or not, we cannot withhold the expression of our admiration of the financial ability and genius which he displayed in his lucid and eloquent Statement.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Mr. Courtney, I have no wish to curtail the discussion; but I rise now to deal with the questions which have been put to me, lest, if I delayed my answer any longer I should be accused of want of courtesy to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen. I will deal, in the first instance, with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler); but I desire to make this preliminary remark — that several other right hon. Gentlemen, and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), have spoken with regard to what I ought to have proposed—of my omission to deal in my Budget with most important matters. I must once more throw myself upon the indulgence of the Committee and the public, and beg them to remember the very short time that I have been in Office, and, at the same time, the very great problems with which I—in common with my Colleagues—have had to deal. It has been my wish to pay considerable attention to all legislative proposals, especially as regards finance, and I assure the Committee that it is from no want of appreciation of the greatness of the subjects with which I have not been able to deal, that they, unfortunately, have not been included in the proposals I have made to the Committee. For instance, I admit the immense importance of the subject of gold coinage; but it is a subject with which it would be extremely wrong to deal without going thoroughly into the matter, and the very variety of the suggestions that have been made to the Committee as to the methods in which they might deal with this complicated problem shows that I should be scarcely justified in accepting any particular scheme without having examined the question from every side. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington is perfectly right in saying that the ground had been carefully prepared; but it is not only the question of the gold coinage that has to be taken into consideration. The very discussion to-night has shown that it is no use thinking of that alone. There is the question of the £1 note; there is the question of the country bank issues; and there is also the question of the profit made by the Bank of England, and of the profit made by the Mint; and I am bound to say that all these questions taken together form a congeries of problems with which it would not have been possible for me to deal hastily, and which I could not take up unless I had at least a couple of months in which to devote my best attention to them. The matter is one I am most anxious to take in hand, and I can assure the noble Lord I propose to pay immediate attention to it; and I only hope the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) will be able to use his influence with his Friends to secure proper time and opportunity for the discussion of any measure dealing with the coinage which the Chancellor of the Exchequer may still be able to submit to the House in the present Session. I do not despair in the least of being able to produce a measure; but these are questions which require a certain amount of time for their discussion, and I am not sanguine that we shall in this Session of Parliament be able to find the necessary amount of time to deal with them. I wish, however, to endorse every word said by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and the hon. Gentleman opposite, who pointed out that we have not only to deal with the difficulty of making arrangements concerning the gold coinage and the paper circulation, but that there is a question also with regard to the silver circulation and the bronze circulation. They wish these matters to be taken up, and I endorse their views very cordially. With regard to the bronze circulation, the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Whitechapel Division of the Tower Hamlets

(Mr. Montagu) suggested that more liberal terms should have been granted with regard to the exchange. In the decision I took on the subject I was not guided by any anxiety on account of the Exchequer, because the interest of the Exchequer in this matter seemed to me not to compare in importance with that of the people, especially the poor people amongst whom the bronze coin circulates. But I was anxious, once for all, to strike a blow at the foreign coin circulating here, so that there might be no temptation again to promote the free introduction of such coins into Great Britain and Ireland. It was necessary to strike foreign coins—if I may say so—with a serious disability. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton made some remarks to which I would here call attention. I thank him for the cordial and complimentary terms in which he spoke of myself. He said, in the course of his speech, that urban districts would receive no relief under the present scheme, and I admit the justice of his criticism so far as it goes. But I regret, in connection with that, that in my Statement I did not sufficiently dwell on the great increase in value that there has been in house property during recent years as compared with landed property. The fact is, that the agricultural depression has fallen with extreme weight upon that margin of rent and that margin of profit which is left over to the landowner and the farmer after meeting the charges falling upon them. My right hon. Friend the Member for East Wolverhampton is familiar enough with the subject to be able to follow me. The increase of rates in the country districts falls not on the total assessment, but on that portion of the revenue which is left to the landowner after meeting the charge for incumbrances, and which is frequently only a half or a third of the whole; and, consequently, there has been an extreme pressure on the agricultural ratepayers, because the margin of profits on which they have paid their rents has been reduced much more in proportion than has been the case in the urban districts. The argument may not carry conviction to my right hon. Friend; but, at all events, he will see that I have reasons for regarding the case of the agricultural and the urban ratepayer as dissimilar. Moreover, £74,000 under this proposal will go to urban districts; but, at the same time, I accept my right hon. Friend's criticism to a certain extent. This is a matter which I think we need not make a Party question at all. In fact, I have received quite as many representations from Liberal Members as from Conservative Members on this side of the House with regard to it. There is no doubt that, owing to the particular circumstances of the last three years, there has been great pressure upon the ratepayers of the poorest of the agricultural districts, much greater than has been felt in the towns. I have further to remark, that this concession is not in any way to be considered as prejudicing the great question of the reform of local taxation. It is most distinctly temporary; and I think, although it is a large concession in one sense, it is not sufficiently large to induce any Conservative reactionary to resist the considerable convenience which will arise from a reform of local government. I do not think that that argument would have sufficient weight. Now, Mr. Courtney, the main objection which has been made to my proposals, and one the force of which I am quite prepared to acknowledge, is with regard to the diminution of the payment on account of Debt from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000. I hope I may deal shortly with this question in replying to the criticisms which have come from the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and from other hon. Members. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton has stated the case in this way. He said the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington and I would both agree in this, that the Income Tax, under the altered circumstances of the present time as compared with the prosperity of former years, could scarcely be left at 8*d.* in the pound, but that the noble Lord was for diminishing the taxation by curtailment of Expenditure, whilst I was in favour of relieving the taxpayers by diminishing the payment of the National Debt. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, although extremely friendly and complimentary to me in some respects, passed a very severe criticism upon the proposal I submitted to the House. He begun by alluding to a compliment which I had paid to him——

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I repudiated the first.

Mr. GOSCHEN: He repudiated the first compliment which I paid him, but which I think he certainly deserves—namely, that he did contribute to securing a surplus in the past year. The noble Lord was a vigilant and severe guardian of the public purse; and he succeeded in averting many a claim upon it which, but for the ferocity he displayed, would probably have reduced the very creditable surplus at the end of the year to a much smaller figure. Therefore, I hope the noble Lord will not repudiate the compliment I paid him. I will pay him a compliment also as to the Estimates for the coming year. In this direction he exercised his whole influence to diminish the Estimates of all the Departments; but I should be committing an error of taste if I were to attempt to distinguish how much was due to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, and how much to the noble Lord who presides over the Admiralty, and the right hon. Gentleman who is responsible for the War Department (Mr. E. Stanhope). I am aware that the noble Lord put every pressure in his power on the Departments in order to induce them to reduce expenditure; but how far the reductions were due to exertions on their part, or to the pressure brought to bear upon them by the noble Lord, will never be cleared up, but remains in the confidence of the noble Lord and his Colleagues. All I can say is, that when I came into Office I found a great disposition on the part of Heads of Departments to do their utmost to cut down expenditure and meet the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The noble Lord was scarcely justified in saying that I did not mention economy from the beginning of my speech to the end. I spoke, as he acknowledged, upon the necessity of economy with regard to the Civil Service Estimates, and I also spoke of great economy that was being exercised on the part of Heads of the Army and Navy; and I pointed out how I trusted and believed that a large portion of the present expenditure for defensive purposes was exceptional and temporary. I also expressed confidence that in the coming year there would be considerable decrease in the expenditure; and it must not be forgotten, and the country must not forget, that the Estimates for the Supply Services this year show a reduction of between £700,000 and £800,000, as compared with last year. I regret that right hon. Gentlemen and hon. Gentlemen should put me—who am responsible for the public purse—into the position of having to defend expenditure upon the Army and Navy; but, at the same time, it would be unjust on my part if I were to overlook the difficulties that have been placed on the great Departments by the exceptional measures which the noble Lord distinctly recognized, but which he said did not sufficiently account for the whole increase that had taken place. Now I wish there could be an opportunity, once for all, for the House in its corporate capacity to make up its mind what it wishes with regard to the Army and Navy, instead of from year to year, according to changes of Government, bandying to and fro charges of extravagant Expenditure. I wish that the House of Commons, or the country as represented by the House of Commons, would make up its mind, once for all, as to the amount it is right to spend, and that having made so up its mind, it would accept the sacrifices involved cheerfully, so as to enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to frame his Budgets accordingly. We are most anxious to devise some plan by which we could so present the Estimates to the House as to enable them to define a policy not for one particular year, but for a series of years. I hope the Committee will think I am justified, after the speech of the noble Lord, in saying a word or two on this question of Naval and Military Expenditure. The point is this. If this expenditure is not necessary—if it is not absolutely essential for the security of the country—let it be reduced by all means, and let us insist that it shall be brought down to what is absolutely indispensable for the security of the country. But if it is necessary, then let us consider how the taxation requisite to meet it can be imposed in the most bearable form. To seek to persuade the country to reduce expenditure by putting taxation on in so disagreeable a form that the taxpayers refuse to vote what is demanded would be a course against which I, for one, would seriously protest. Yet that is a doctrine which is almost avowed by some right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench. They say the only means of convincing the country not to undertake extra expenditure on the great Services is by making the taxation so uncomfortable that it will not be be submitted to. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, that is not exactly the argument of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, but it is the variation of the noble Lord's argument adopted by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. He put it in that form. The noble Lord was very strenuous upon the point that any increase in our armaments ought to be borne by additional taxation. This was to make the country feel a great inducement to cut down expenditure by reducing armaments. The noble Lord says the sums now expended are much too large, and if the noble Lord thinks this expenditure too large he is right in using every effort to diminish it; and he is not far wrong, from the point of view which I alluded to just now, in desiring to put the screw on the country by means of stringent taxation. But I want the House of Commons, which I presume has some common sense, to decide for itself without the screw whether the present expenditure on the Army and Navy is too high or is not. I do not wish to be put in the position of defending the present scale of Army Expenditure, still it is right that the Committee and the public should remember that a great portion of that expenditure is due to the talent of inventors in constantly discovering new guns, new shells, new ammunition, and new engines of destruction of every kind; and that if these new inventions were not adopted, the Government would be blamed for not providing the Nation with the best weapons, just as when they are adopted, it is blamed for what is called extravagant expenditure. Now, what is the cause of the present exceptional Expenditure in the Army? Is it not in a great part due to the new small arm? Very well, if the House of Commons wishes the country not to vote these sums, and to put the screw on the taxpayers of the country by heavy taxes to induce them not to vote these increased sums, then do not let us at the same time insist that it is necessary to arm our soldiers with the best weapon which is available at the moment? Are we or are we not to go into action with worse guns than those of our neighbours? It is not enough to point to increased expenditure; it is necessary to say in what respect the expenditure has been wrong, but neither the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, nor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, nor the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, could place their finger upon any particular point such as the expenditure for securing new arms, and could say that that particular expenditure ought not to have been incurred. They say, generally, that there has been waste and maladministration, and, so far as that is the case, let us deal with it; but, at the same time, let us also make up our minds whether we want less defence than we have at present. I, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, would be extremely glad to see a reduction in the Army and Navy Estimates of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000; but I say this with one reservation. If that reduction should lead to panics by which trade would be interrupted, by which credit would be affected, and consequently by which a great injury would be inflicted on the Revenue; and if these panics should lead in the future as they have led over and over again in the past, to reckless expenditure of public money the moment that the slightest danger arises, then I say that it is a dangerous and a wasteful policy in time of peace—such as we are now enjoying—and which we wish to continue to enjoy, to insist on an excessive reduction. Reductions on a large scale have frequently been made; but they have almost always been followed by a spasmodic increase afterwards, and by Votes of Credit, out of which an opportunity has been taken to fill up the stores that had been depleted in these seasons of economy. Such panics, have I may almost say, come to the rescue of the Departments after they had been unduly weakened by great fits of economy. Now, I trust that neither the noble Lord, nor any Gentleman opposite, will say that this language of mine points in the slightest degree to any inclination on my part to be less anxious with regard to economy than any other Member of the Committee. Of course, everyone in my position, if he has any ambition to deal with the important financial problems that are before the country, hopes not to be merely one year in Office, but to have more than an opportunity of proposing financial reforms. Therefore, no one is more deeply interested than the Chancellor of the Exchequer in seeing that there should be a large and progressive decrease in the Army and Navy Estimates; and I shall use my utmost endeavours, with my noble and right hon. Friends at the Admiralty and the War Office, and with the rest of my Colleagues, to bring about a diminution in these directions. But I do not think, if the Government, as a whole, is convinced that a certain expenditure is necessary for the defence of the country, that it would be fair for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to endeavour to counteract that policy by making the burden for the discharge of this expenditure so disagreeable to the taxpayers that they would revolt against it. One word I am bound to say in reply to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, when he says that our Army is the most costly Army in the world, and that we get the least amount of value out of it. I would ask, has the right hon. Gentleman added to the cost of foreign armies the cost to the population of forced conscription? I am continually seeing these comparisons made, and on paper they are extremely plausible; but when I see them I cannot but remember that in this country we are happily free from that blood-tax imposed on the rest of Europe, by which men are taken away in the prime of life, and at that period when it is most important for them to become bread winners, and are forced into the Army. Let the right hon. Gentleman add to the pay of Continental Armies the loss to those who are forced to enter them, and the loss to their families by their being taken away from remunerative employment, and he will find a totally different bill from what he appears to imagine. There is another point raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, which I would refer, and that is a question which has as deep an interest for myself as it has for the right hon. Gentleman. I allude to the question of the Non-Effective Service. That is a source of expenditure which requires watching at every point. It is no use dealing with existing rights, because the right hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that it is impossible to cut down the pensions of those who are now entitled to them. The proper course is to make different terms with those who may hereafter enter the Service, and that is a matter to which I agree the greatest attention should be paid. I think that, if possible, in our arrangements both for men and for officers in each of the great Services, we rely too much on pensions and too little on actual wages; but, of course, the claims of those who enter the Service to pensions enables us to secure them at a much lower rate of pay than we should be otherwise able to do. If this Non-Effective Vote did not exist, we should have to face a czrtain increase in the Effective Vote. And there is another point with regard to the Non-Effective Vote, at the present time, which should be borne in mind. No one who is sitting opposite to me will deny that some of the greatest reforms in the Army and Navy for which—and I associate myself with the right hon. Gentlemen opposite—we have taken credit in the past, have consisted in the reorganization of those Services which we believe has added very greatly to their efficiency, but which has also added very largely to the Pension List. I do not know what effect was produced by the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton on the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh, when he spoke of the large number of men who, having been underpaid for years, enjoy pensions without rendering any further service to the State. But there was no one who was more convinced of the necessity of creating that flow of promotion in the Services which now exists—and with reference to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton drew a not very convincing analogy from the case of the Bar—than my right hon.

Friend the Member for South Edinburgh. I regret the growth of the Non-Effective Service. It is a matter that must be watched; but it is not a matter for which either Party in the State can be considered particularly responsible. It is a matter in which the whole House of Commons should take an interest. But let me return once more to the question of Expenditure in general. What I protest against is the view that the whole of the increase in expenditure for new weapons ought to be put on one class of taxpayers in order to create a rebellion amongst them against that expenditure which the House of Commons, in its wisdom, considers to be necessary. It seems to me a most objectionable policy that the House of Commons should vote these increased Estimates, and then should endeavour to disgust the country with the work which it has itself undertaken, by imposing taxation in a disagreeable form which will prevent the country from doing that which the House thinks it necessary that it should do. Now I do not know to what extent I have to defend myself against the proposition—apart from any question of Expenditure—that the reduction in the amount applicable to the Sinking Fund of the National Debt from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000 is a change that ought never to have been proposed. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington says he doubts whether this is my own Budget. I am afraid I must tell him—though I fear, after what he has said, that it will lower me very much in his financial, if not in his personal estimation—that this is my own Budget. I am not only purely responsible for it, but I have proposed it upon my own initiative; and, as I am responsible for it, I must take blame for it, even though it increase the censure of the noble Lord. But the noble Lord did not object, as I understand, to the reduction from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000 in itself. I think he said the proposal was a good one. He did not object to tampering with the National Debt; but he objected to tampering with it inthe particular mode I have proposed.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I tried to characterize the £6,000,000 which the country pays annually at present in reduction of the Capital of the National Debt as a great financial reserve weapon in the hands of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, which ought only to be resorted to in cases of emergency, such as war, or when the Chancellor of the Exchequer wishes to carry through some great financial operation with regard to the taxation of the country.

Mr. GOSCHEN: That is just the sentence of the noble Lord's on which I had fastened. This Debt-charge, he says, is not only a great financial weapon to be used in case of emergency; but it is also a great reserve for an enterprising Chancellor of the Exchequer who may want to carry out some large scheme of financial reform. It was precisely because it was to a certain degree in my mind, that it would be possible for a Chancellor of the Exchequer for the purpose of a great financial reform to seize not only on part of this £6,000,000, but on the whole of it—it was because I saw what a temptation this great reserve would be that I thought it safer to place the matter on a basis which could be defended, rather than to leave it on the basis on which it stands now. I saw that this £6,000,000 was a formidable and enticing sum to have at the disposal of a bold and enterprising Chancellor of the Exchequer. I could not guarantee the existence of the Sinking Fund for very many years if it were not placed on a footing more conformable to the financial condition of the time. I am sorry to have impaired this reserve of future Chancellors of the Exchequer by diminishing the amount which will be at the disposal of bold and adventurous spirits in the future. But it seemed to me that there were strong and immediate reasons why some relief should be given in certain quarters where taxation has failed to be remunerative, as in the Tobacco Duty, or where it has been raised temporarily and exceptionally, as in the case of the payers of Income Tax. For these purposes it seemed to me a legitimate operation to reduce the Debt-charge from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000. The noble Lord will remember that he was a Member of the Government that imposed the 2*d.* additional Income Tax—it was imposed, I think, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael

Hicks-Beach), when he succeeded the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh, and that at the same time suspended almost the whole of the Sinking Fund. This sacred sum which is to remain at the disposal of Chancellors of the Exchequer for great reforms, was again trenched upon in the following year to the extent of £800,000 by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I do not want to enter into a controversy on this question with the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, or with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, or any Member of this House, in any bitter spirit. I am glad that there is a considerable feeling in the House that the Debt should continue to be paid off in large sums. I appreciate fully the spirit that animates the Committee with regard to that point; and it is a question for them to determine whether they think it is safer—looking to the future—and whether it is juster—looking to the present—whether it is fairer—looking to the incidence of taxation—that the whole burden of paying off Debt should be placed on one class of taxpayers; or whether I am justified in relieving that class and placing the Debt-charge, as I believe, on a safer footing in the future, by reducing the annual amount to £26,000,000. I have endeavoured to deal with the principal objections which have been raised against my proposals. I will now touch on some point of detail. A question was asked me by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby with regard to Treasury Bills. The Treasury Bills which already exist, to my mind, are on too large a scale, the total Floating Debt being £15,000,000 or £16,000,000. It is extremely cheap, I will admit, and there is a temptation to keep the whole afloat; but I should not consider it to be regular finance permanently to rely on Treasury Bills to that extent. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington asked a question with regard to the Customs and Excise; he asked whether the Estimate for Excise was not somewhat too high. I have explained to the Committee that there would have been a fall in Excise, had it not been for the anticipated increase of £130,000 on beer. This has more than compensated for the decrease—not a large decrease—on spirits. That decrease, as I stated, would have been larger but that there is an additional day for consumption in the year. With regard to other duties, we have allowed for a decrease in the Legacy Duty and Succession Duty; but a certain amount of increase has been set down in regard to stamps. The noble Lord was perfectly correct in saying—and I think this was also said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby—that it is the duty of a Chancellor of the Exchequer to accept in the main the views of his most able advisers in the Customs and Inland Revenue Departments; but it is also the duty of a Chancellor of the Exchequer to subject them to what may be called cross-examination. I have endeavoured to argue the matter with them, so as to elicit the whole of the facts, and I have come to the conclusion that, whatever the Estimates may be, they have not been placed at too high a figure. The Estimates with regard to spirits were framed very carefully, and the Estimates with regard to beer have been arrived at after taking into account the effect of the low price of hops and the extra day for consumption; and, on the whole, relying upon the ability of my advisers, I shall be very much disappointed if, at the end of the present financial year—if should it be my fortune still to preside over the finances of the country—I shall not be able to show at least the surplus estimated. I should hope it would be exceeded.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): Like other Members of the Committee, I have listened with great interest to the very able Statement of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). The proposal to keep a clear and separate record of local loan transactions is very important. As regards the Income Tax on farmers, I presume that under the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the difference between English farmers on the one hand, and Irish and Scotch on the other, will be removed. Whatever reasons there might have been originally, I know none now why English farmers should pay more than those of Scotland and Ireland. I presume that it is not proposed to transfer the payments of those who avail themselves of his offer to Schedule D, but only that the calculation should be made on that basis. It is certainly desirable to keep the profits of farming in a special Schedule; and though it may be levied on the same principles as under Schedule D, I presume it will still be returned under Schedule B. Considering the great demands on the time and attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer since his accession to Office, I do not wonder that he has not been able to mature any proposals with reference to the state of the gold coinage. At the same time, it is most unsatisfactory, and demands the early attention of the right hon. Gentleman. I may say confidently that, at the present time, more than 60 per cent is so light as to be no longer legal tender. Mr. Martin and Mr. Palgrave estimated it some years ago at 55 per cent, and Mr. Agar, the able secretary of the Institute of Bankers, confirmed me when I say that at present, certainly as much as 60 per cent is so much worn as to be no longer legal tender, and, of course, it becomes worse every year. To place the gold circulation in a proper condition would now cost, in round numbers, £1,000,000, and the wear and tear amounts to about £60,000 a-year. In round numbers, therefore, about £100,000 a-year is required to replace and keep the gold circulation in a satisfactory condition. I think, however, that we have a fair right to call on the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide this amount. At present he makes a profit of over £180,000 out of the English circulation, which is more than double as much as is required to keep the gold currency in a satisfactory condition. On account of the Bank of England notes he received last year over £153,000; for Stamp Duty, £60,000; and from the Mint £74,000. The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Whitechapel Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Montagu) suggests that we should deal with the difficulty of light gold by the issue of £1 notes, and seems to think that there would be no danger from forgery in this country if that plan were adopted. He bases his statement upon Reports from foreign countries; but I would point out to him that the whole system of transacting financial business in foreign countries is so different from ours at home that I think it would be unsafe to rely upon those Reports. The case of Scotland is, of course, one nearer in point; but we have this remarkable circumstance to remember—that in the old days when we had £1 notes in England, and they had £1 notes in Scotland as they have now, there were no forgeries of those notes in Scotland, whilst there were an immense number in this country. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) said he never could see any reason for that. Well, I would suggest that the reason for that was that as in Scotland all the banks issued their own notes, the notes returned to the issuing bank in a few days; whereas in England, being issued by one central bank, they remained out for weeks, even for months. The consequence was that anyone who was inclined to forge knew that in Scotland the police would come down on them in seven or eight days, whereas in England they would, perhaps, have months to escape in. I think, therefore, this question should be carefully looked into before we return again to the old system of £1 notes. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) proposed to raise the funds necessary either by doing away with the half-sovereign or by increased economy in management. With regard to doing away with the half-sovereign, I think he will find that the general opinion in mercantile quarters is that the half-sovereign is a very convenient coin; and, as regards economy, I doubt if any large sum could be secured in that way. Then there is the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), when Chancellor of the Exchequer, that we should keep the half-sovereign, but should make it a token coin and reduce the amount of gold in it from 10*s.* to 9*s.* I never shared the apprehension which was felt with reference to that change; but I think the right hon. Gentleman will agree with me that bankers at that time were very unwilling to agree to the proposal, and that it was not favourably received. The bankers, so far as their views could be ascertained, were ready to give an assent—but it was a reluctant assent—to this proposal in view of the great importance of having the question settled. I have shown, however, that the country derives a sum from the currency ample, and more than ample, to keep it in a satisfactory condition. Moreover, as more is required, I think it is worthy of consideration whether we might not make a moderate increase in the amount of notes issued against security. At present the total issue of Bank of England notes issued against securities is £15,750,000. The question arises whether some moderate addition to the issue against securities might not safely be permitted. The presumption, of course, is strongly in favour of such a conclusion. The amount issued otherwise than against gold is absolutely less now than it was 40 years ago, while, in the meantime, the population and commerce has immensely increased. No doubt the amount issued by the Bank of England itself has been raised from £14,000,000 to £15,750,000; £475,000 was added in 1855, £175,000 in 1861, £350,000 in 1866, and £750,000 in 1881; but this has been to replace other lapsed issues to a still larger amount—over £3,000,000. Now let us consider what has been the actual amount of Bank of England notes in circulation. Last year the lowest sum in circulation was £33,400,000 on December 29; in 1881 it was £35,000,000 at the same period. Since 1870 the amount has never once fallen to £33,000,000. In the last 20 years it has never fallen as low as £30,000,000. Since the original passage of the Bank Act it has never fallen below £21,000,000, or, on the present basis, £24,000,000. Under these circumstances, it might be worthy of consideration whether the amount could not be raised somewhat without risk. Even if the amount were kept exactly where it stood when the Bank Act was passed, and we were to do no more than re-issue the amounts of country bank circulation which have lapsed, the interest thus accruing would be sufficient not only to make good the annual loss from wear and tear, but also to provide a fund which would go far to replace the present light gold without additional loss to the country. The longer this question is deferred the more serious and difficult it will become; and I earnestly commend it to the early attention of the right hon. Gentleman. I also greatly regret the proposal to reduce the Tobacco Duties under existing circumstances. As to Marine Insurance, I think it only right that I should express my thanks to the right hon. Gentleman for his statement, having on several occasions urged successive Chancellors of the Exchequer to reduce the stamps on certain classes of Marine Insurance. He says, truly, that the effect of the present system has been to drive a certain class of insurance almost entirely out of the country. I am glad that he has seen fit to lower the duty, and I am disposed to think that he may receive a larger revenue from the small duty than he received from the higher duty. But I cannot say how much I regret some of the other proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. In the first place, the increased subvention to Local Authorities appears to me to be a step in the wrong direction, and one I never expected to hear the right hon. Gentleman himself propose. With regard to the contribution to Ireland, I would suggest that if he is going to make it at all, it would be better to do it by way of increasing the stipends of the under-paid schoolmasters rather than in any other way. But the cardinal feature of the Budget really is the reduction of the amount set apart for repayment of capital of the National Debt. The right hon. Gentleman, in support of his scheme, says he puts this sum in a position in which it can be defended. Why will it be more defensible in the future than it has been before? It seems to me that his proposal will make it more difficult to defend it. The plan proposed by Sir Stafford Northcote, if it had been carried out, would have enabled us to reduce the National Debt by a substantial figure, and would, in the course of a few years, have enabled us to effect a reduction of the interest on Debt to the advantage of the taxpayers of the country. Sir Stafford Northcote's Sinking Fund, however, was never put in force on the lines he proposed; but I did hope that now his old Colleagues are on the Treasury Bench they would, in the present time of peace, have mentioned the Sinking Fund upon which he laid so much stress. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is reducing the amount of payment in extinction of Debt, and is doing this in a time of profound peace. I cannot help feeling great regret that he is taking this course. I think it shows a want of firm policy. There would be much greater confidence felt in the statements made with regard to reduction of interest on Debt if people could feel that successive Chancellors of the Exchequer have made up their minds what course they intend to pursue with regard to this great question. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington rather threw out a hope that the right hon. Gentleman might probably reconsider the course he is proposing in this matter. I do not know if it is too late for the right hon. Gentleman to do so. In the remarks he made just now he seemed to be glad that his proposal had been freely criticized by the Committee. I think he will see that it is the desire of the Committee to continue the payments in reduction of the National Debt. Though it is true, as he says, that if we continue the reduction at £5,000,000 a-year we shall pay off the Debt in 70 years, that is assuming that we are so fortunate as to remain at peace and suffer no great national disaster. That, I think, is too much to hope. Under the circumstances, we were not doing too much for reduction of Debt; and I regret, moreover, that the right hon. Gentleman has, to some extent, committed himself to the future, because, though he only gives up £1,500,000 of Income Tax this year by the process I have referred to, the remission next year will be £2,000,000. I certainly concur with what has been said by other speakers who have expressed regret that the right hon. Gentleman has not reduced the Naval and Military Expenditure, instead of interfering with the repayment of Debt.

Mr. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): My reason for venturing to take part in this discussion is that I was sent here to watch those questions which affect agriculture, and I do not like this opportunity to pass without thanking the right hon. Gentleman for, at any rate, remembering agriculture in the Budget he has just placed before us. I was very much surprised to find that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) seemed to demur to agriculture and trade being described as being in a state of great depression.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I did not speak specifically of agriculture; I was speaking generally.

Mr. C. W. GRAY: I am very glad I have elicited that explanation from the right hon. Gentleman. I must say I fail to see how agriculture can be depressed—and "ruin" is a better term for its present condition—without breaking down with it all other trades and industries in the country. For that reason I should say that everyone interested in either trade or agriculture must be indebted to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for doing a little for us, if not very much. I feel sure it is to future Chancellors of the Exchequer, and to future Budgets, that agriculture will have to look for some relief and for restoration to that proud position which it used to occupy. We heard a good deal about land tenure yesterday; but I believe it will be fiscal reform that will bring back agricultural prosperity more than anything that can be done in the direction of a Land Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) appeared to me to prejudge the small subvention which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is about to give to the agricultural interest. I am very much surprised indeed to find that any hon. Member of this House should judge so small a subvention as this. I think I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that rating had not increased in the rural districts? [Mr. Henry H. Fowler assented.] I see he assents to that. Well, if rating has not increased, certainly the power of paying rates has greatly decreased. It was not long since a fresh impost was placed on the shoulders—the already galled shoulders—of the farmers, I mean the School Tax. I agree that national education is a great thing, and I shall certainly uphold it; but the farmer is not in a position to pay increased taxes, and anyone who has his interest at heart will not grudge him the small subvention which has been granted to him by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. A great deal has been said in connection with the Army and Navy. I should be getting out of my depth if I were to do more than touch on that point; but I must remind hon. Gentlemen who seem to grudge money for the maintenance of the Army and Navy that so long as they insist that foreign productions shall be admitted into this country without paying duty—I am now alluding to food—they must remember that the position of England may be jeopardized one day by the fact that we are only able to grow a very small proportion of the food required for the subsistence of the nation. Please to remember that. And if you will not allow one word in connection with fiscal reform to be dropped in this House as applied to food, remember that you must take the consequences, and you must be willing to find the money to keep your ports perfectly open, and to protect the seas by which your food comes in, or else you will find one day that the cheap loaf of which we had heard so much will turn into a dear one. You will find that the land you have allowed to go out of cultivation will not become covered with grain by the magical wave of a wand. Before the land you are allowing to go out of cultivation, and in aid of which you begrudge this small subvention, could be made to produce the food we want, we might be at the mercy of some Foreign Power. There are many other matters mentioned in the Budget which might give relief to agriculture; but it would not be fair, at this hour of the morning, to touch upon them. All I can say is that if hon. Gentlemen opposite care one rap for the position of England's agriculture, they must show more sympathy with us in the future than they have done in the past. English farmers, I am proud to say, have kept quiet, under the greatest temptation, to go in for agitation. But there may be an end even to the patience of an English farmer. I hope, however, it will be shown that it is not the case that the House of Commons only listened to grievances which had been brought to its attention by turbulent agitation. I thank the House for having listened to these remarks; and I most sincerely hope that no one will suffer from the little attention which has been given to my industry by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to-night.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Mr. Courtney, I propose to-night to adhere to the old rule, which was that the debate, on the first night when the Chancellor of the Exchequer has opened his Budget, should be confined as much as possible to asking questions arising out of his Statement, and to obtaining further information upon points of doubt. Therefore, all I wish to say on the general question, I think I can say in a very few words. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to me to have placed before the House, extremely clearly, questions which are really of great complication, and however some of them may involve difficulty, he, at any rate, has done his utmost to make them clear to all of us. I thank him very much for the great length at which he explained to the House some points—points which, perhaps, might seem to be of less importance, but which, in reality, form most valuable portions of his Budget, and which will be very much better debated on future occasions, in consequence of the very great clearness, and even the great length, at which he stated some of them. But I rise particularly to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer one or two questions which we shall have to discuss on the day to which the present debate is adjourned, and which must form part of the most important section of that discussion. I wish to allude, in the first place, to the proposal with respect to the National Debt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated very plainly what he proposes to do; but what I think he will have very clearly to put to us when we on the next occasion are discussing the Budget — with respect to the diminution of the amount set aside for reducing the National Debt, is why he thinks it would be easier to stand by £26,000,000 than by £28,000,000. At first sight, of course, it was very much better to stand by what is and has been the law now for some years, which all Chancellors of the Exchequer following the late Sir Stafford Northcote have adhered to. It was necessary, on one occasion, in a great emergency, to abandon for a year the reduction of the Sinking Fund; but I think it will be necessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to show, very categorically, how it is easier to defend 26,000,000 than to defend £28,000,000, and how, if he is Chancellor of the Exchequer for another year or two, he will be able to repel demands for the reduction from £26,000,000 to £24,000,000, for instance, on the ground he has stated to-night. But I wish to put two other points to him for his consideration. He has said that this is the third year of the great Naval Expenditure initiated by Lord Northbrook; that Lord Northbrook proposed to spread the expenditure over five years, and that the skill and the energy of the present Government and the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War have had the result of reducing those five years to three years, so that, at the end of the present year, that expenditure of about £6,000,000 will come to an end, £6,000,000 being, on an average, £2,000,000 a-year. The question I should like the Chancellor of the Exchequer to answer is this—if, therefore, we may look forward to a considerable reduction of this expenditure next year, why in this year make an alteration in the sum applied to the reduction of the National Debt? If you tide over the present year, you find the expenditure of the Army and Navy diminished by £2,000,000, and then there will be no excuse for reducing the Sinking Fund; and I should like the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal with that question. Then I wish to put this question. He gave reasons which were very intelligible why £28,000,000 was the amount set aside in prosperous times, when Sir Stafford Northcote fixed the amount of the Sinking Fund. But I want him to answer this—has he considered what proportion that bore to the entire amount of Revenue, or the entire amount of Expenditure? Because, I think he will find that when the Revenue was £72,000,000 a-year, Sir Stafford Northcote was of opinion that £28,000,000 was a fair amount to be attributed to the reduction of the National Debt. Now the Revenue has increased to £90,000,000, and the *primâ facie* argument will arise — if you have £90,000,000 of Revenue now, where you had only £72,000,000 before, and if out of that £72,000,000 £28,000,000 was to be set aside for the reduction of the National Debt, you ought now to set aside not a smaller but a larger sum. Instead of that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is proposing to set aside a smaller sum. I think that argument will require to be met. It is an argument which must occur to anyone considering the subject, and it was an argument which was very strongly put forward by Sir Stafford Northcote himself, and also by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) when he supported, some years before, a large amount to be attributed to the Sinking Fund only in the shape of Terminable Annuities, in anticipation and to operate in lieu of the Sinking Fund settled by Sir Stafford Northcote. These three questions are, I think, worth the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I said, I am not going to discuss the matter further, but to reserve the question to a future day, and I do not think it necessary to do more than ask these questions. All I have to do now is to say, in his presence, what I said said when he was not in the House, that I think he gave us very clearly an extremely difficult Statement—a Statement as difficult as any I have ever heard announced by a Chancellor of the Exchequer in this House; and that we owe him very much in the shape of relief from the necessity of inquiring into points of detail; because, as I presume, we shall have, in a few days, his speech in our hands, so that we can refer to it. But I would ask him to expedite the printing of his speech, so that we may have the terms of the Statement he has made to us to-night in an official and formal shape; and also I hope he will, in some way, let us sooner have the figures of the computations of some of which he has only given the results. I have said I will not argue any point, and I will only conclude by asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what date he proposes to adjourn the Committee. We shall, I presume, pass the Tea Resolution as customary. [An hon. MEMBER: And Income Tax.] No, Sir; the Income Tax Resolution involves a change. There is no hurry, for I have known the Income Tax Resolution passed in the month of May. It would be very inconvenient to take a Resolution effecting change as a mere matter of form. Where there is no change there can be no objection to it.

MR. GOSCHEN: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman opposite, whether he will consider whether we might not take at all events, the reduction of the Tobacco Duty now? The trade is disturbed for a considerable time when a Resolution of that kind is hanging over its head. The Income Tax is of course extremely inconvenient. I acknowledge the force of the right hon. Gentleman's remark. I do not propose to press it; but with regard to the Tobacco Duty, if right hon. Gentleman opposite saw their way to assent to that Resolution, it would certainly further what we nearly all agree would be a desirable reform.

Mr. CHILDERS: I look upon the proposal as to the Tobacco Duty as in all probability a good one; although I ought not to commit myself to more than that. But let me remind my right hon. Friend that the reduction of the Tobacco Duty cannot take place for some time, as there are large stocks. Therefore there can be no hurry about the matter. From what time does my right hon. Friend propose that it should take effect?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I was going to say I propose to fix this day month, the 21st of May, for the reduction of the Tobacco Duty; and the new drawback, which will be 3*s.* 3*d.* instead of 3*s.* 7*d.*, may well come into operation on the 31st of May.

Mr. CHILDERS: I think those are very reasonable dates; and if these dates are adopted, we might well pass the Resolution next week.

Sir ROBERT FOWLER (London): I have to ask the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what fell from my hon. Friend the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock) with regard to the half-sovereign. I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give his best attention to it. I have listened to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I listened to one part with great satisfaction, and to another portion with great regret. What I listened to with great satisfaction was the proposition with regard to the local Budget. The right hon. Gentleman, being not only a statesman but a man of business, sees the great advantage of the alteration he has proposed. I believe it will be of the very greatest advantage. The part of his speech that I listened to with regret, was that which has been alluded to by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), by the hon. Member for the University of London, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), and others, in regard to the reduction of the £28,000,000 to £26,000,000. The late Sir Stafford Northcote made a great effort to reduce the Debt. I think it is a matter we should always bear strongly in mind to endeavour to effect a reduction of the Debt. I am very sorry to see a Government, and especially a Chancellor of the Exchequer in whom I have such confidence, lending themselves to such a course as this proposed reduction of the Sinking Fund. I may stand rather alone in the House, but of the three Budgets which the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington sketched out, it seemed to me that the first Budget was that which the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have adopted, when my right hon. Friend might have kept his surplus, not made any reduction in taxation, and taken the surplus of £800,000 or £900,000 which he would have in the Budget as it originally stood. It does not seem to me that £800,000 is too large a surplus for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to have. I know that his surplus, as far as my memory serves me, is some £100,000 larger than was last year returned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt). But I think both the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby and my right hon. Friend are sailing too near the wind. I think it would be desirable that any Chancellor of the Exchequer, bringing his Budget into the House, should have a surplus of something like £1,000,000. I do not think that is at all too large a surplus It would leave a margin for contingencies. At this hour of the evening I do not wish to detain the Committee; but there are these two points upon which I wished to express my opinion. I wished to express my satisfaction with the proposition with reference to the local Budget, but I greatly regret the proposition which has been made that we should not retain the principle laid down by Sir Stafford Northcote as regards the reduction of the National Debt.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I do not wish to detain the Committee more than a few minutes. There are one or two points on which I wish to say a word. I listened, with great attention, to the very excellent and very practical statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was certainly an essay in finance which ought to be a good lesson to this House; but, at the same time, there were several points to which I felt I must take exception. With regard to the point mentioned by the hon. Member for the Maldon Division of Essex (Mr. C. W. Gray), the subsidy of £245,000 in aid of local rates, I look upon all these subsidies to local rates as only postponing a much larger and greater question which will have to be solved in connection with the agricultural interests of this country. This £245,000 will make no appreciable impression whatever on the rates paid by the agricultural interests of this country. It is like the case of the woman throwing her youngest child to the wolf, and then another child, and so on, but still the wolf follows on. The question raised by my right hon. Friend is a much larger question than will be solved in this way. It will only stand to the very much distressed farmer at the present time, as the child to the wolf. I think if farmers receive this with open arms, they are thankful for small mercies. Certainly, the farmers in my district will not thank them for these mercies. They complain that school rates, highway rates, and Union assessment rates, often amounting to 5*s.* to 7*s.* in the pound, all fell upon their shoulders. With regard to the transfer fee for railway and other stocks, I hardly like to give an opinion upon it, until I see the proposition more distinctly; but I cannot imagine that the Railway Companies of this country, with their £800,000,000 of capital, will care to pay a tax of £400,000 a-year, in order that they may free their shareholders from the cost of transfer, if this is the proposal. It seems almost too ridiculous, to put it in that broad way; and, therefore, I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have to be content with the present amount of stamps which he already gets upon transfers. But, whilst I regret very much the position of the agricultural interest in this Budget, I also very much regret that the question of the Carriage Duty has not been dealt with. I believed the abolition of the Carriage Duty would do more for the agricultural interest than all the grants of £245,000 they receive, in this way—that it would enable many men farming near railways to keep carriages, and in the summer time they would be able to do passenger and other work. I believe the agricultural interest would be much more served by the abolition of the Carriage Duty, which would affect the middle class much more than the upper class. With regard to the Civil Service Estimates, I have always rejoiced, although there may be some little waste at South Kensington, in the much larger Estimates for the Education Votes of this country. They are showing their effects in the well-ordered population of the country in times of great depression, and, in many cases, great want. In the meantime, our pauperism has not increased to any appreciable extent in these bad times; whilst our prisoners and convicts have very much decreased under the beneficial influence of the education of this country. Therefore, I say it is not lost money to begin with, and I think that these Educational Grants will have still to be very much further extended, in order that we might get to that technical education which is so much required in this country, so that we may keep our manufactures and our agriculture up to the mark in the great competition which they have to undergo with all the nations of the world. But, after all, we come back to the great question of the Army and Navy, which has been so ably touched upon to-night. When I came into this House I seconded Motions for a reduction of the Budget by £5,000,000 or £6,000,000. We have a great example at the other side of the Atlantic, where they have 25,000 troops of all arms spread all over the country, and are repaying their Debt. We have now a Budget of £31,000,000 for our Army and Navy, when we could content ourselves with £6,000,000 or £8,000,000 less. If technical education is to go on—if this country is to march with other nations—it will either have to tax itself much more heavily on the necessaries and luxuries of life, or it will have to reduce the Army and Navy appreciably and sensibly. Although the announcements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were of a very satisfactory flavour, as they came out, yet it seems to me they come to very little. We are going to get 1*d.* off the Income Tax, and the sum for the reduction of the National Debt is going to be reduced from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000. It is merely a play upon finance. It seems to me we have got exactly back to where we started with the Sinking Fund, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) said that, whilst he approved of paying off the National Debt, the amount at which the National Debt would be discharged would be entirely dependent on the exigencies of the country. This question will be further discussed; but it seems to me that these points I have mentioned are points upon which my right hon. Friend's Budget has failed.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I will not occupy the time of the Committee more than five minutes, and I only rise because I represent a large agricultural constituency which grows, possibly, a greater breadth of wheat than almost any district in England, and which is unquestionably hard hit by the existence of agricultural distress. We did not expect a very brilliant Budget from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nor any heroic reforms, because we know perfectly well that any legislation must come from below and not from above. It must come from the agricultural labourer. We know, Sir, that we have the sympathy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he said the other day that, in his opinion, taxation ought to be borne by real property and personalty in proper proportion, and also because we know that he thinks that burdens on land have increased and are increasing, whereas they ought to diminish. But our agricultural constituents will think that the concession he has made in reference to Schedule D is rather like a paper concession, and is really only a drop in the ocean of agricultural distress. What we want is a remission, or rather a redistribution, of local taxation. I say a redistribution rather than a remission, because I know that if local taxation is remitted, it must be redistributed so as to fall on some other shoulders; and I think that the shoulders of the farmer are those least able to bear any extra charges beyond those which fall upon them already. I think that the agricultural distress now existing is not unworthy of the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Land is going out of tillage all over England, and in Ireland to the extent of thousands of acres, and when land is out of tillage employment for the agricultural labourer ceases, and when his employment ceases of course his wages cease. The problem, therefore, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the future will have to face is how the labourers are to be kept when there is no work for them to do. At the same time, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, we, in the agricultural districts, shall gratefully accept the concession which the right hon. Gentleman has offered us.

Mr. FINCH-HATTON (Lincolnshire, Spalding): Mr. Courtney, as a Representative of an agricultural district, I must offer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer far warmer thanks for his concession respecting Schedule D than the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just sat down. I think the right hon. Gentleman, from what he stated in his speech, sympathizes far more widely and deeply in the depressed condition of the agricultural interest than even that concession would lead us to suppose; because he announced that the time had come, or was shortly coming, when the whole question of the taxation of agricultural property would have to be considered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that under their Local Government scheme personal property would have to bear its fair share of local taxation. I think that everyone in this House will congratulate the right hon. Gentleman upon the fact that he has been able, by an ingenuity which is, I think, unparalleled, to lay under contribution in this Budget an element which I believe has escaped the vigilance of all other Chancellors of the Exchequer — I mean the element of water. The right hon. Gentleman has thus been able to offer a great boon to the working classes of the country, and one which I know they will appreciate. He has been able to provide them with a stronger glass of beer, and also with better tobacco to smoke. At the same time he will reconcile two interests which have never before been harmonized, because, by a curious coincidence, the teetotallers, who will probably disapprove of both results will thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for having made choice of the element they favour in order to bring those results about. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), in dealing with the question of rates, made a statement which I rose immediately to reply to, but which I was glad the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose at the same time to answer, because he was able to do so much better than I could have done. But I may supplement what my right hon. Friend said by a remark which I think is called for—namely, that although it may, perhaps, be true, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite said, that county rates have only increased by 11 per cent, whilst rates in towns have increased by a much larger percentage, the ratio at which the value of property has increased is very much greater in towns than in the country. In fact, the great difficulty and danger of the agricultural problem is that, while other property has increased in value, agricultural property has actually decreased in value. The great question arising on this Budget is, I think, whether or not the Chancellor of the Exchequer was justified in partly suspending that fund which we have allocated, hitherto with praiseworthy regularity, to the reduction of the National Debt? I understand the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be that there are times when it is necessary, in the interests of the community, to remit taxation, in order to produce what I may call that elasticity with regard to Revenue which will bring us back to the point at which the normal repayment of Debt can be resumed. In the same way, a prudent landowner might make a practice of devoting part of the revenues of his estate to the gradual extinction of the mortgages with which it was burdened; but when it came to a question of whether he should, in a particular year, adhere to that practice, or spend a sufficient amount of money to keep the estate going, he would say—"I will keep the estate going, so that I may be in a better position in future years to pay off the mortgages." That is the position, I think, which the right hon. Gentleman takes upon this question. I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman one question with regard to the very interesting proposal he made—that Companies should pay 1*s.* for each £100 of Stock, in lieu of the transfer money now exacted from their shareholders. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of the fact that a great many Companies do not call up the whole of their share capital, he means that the 1*s.* shall apply to the whole of the share capital of a Company, or only to so much of it as is called up? I think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's answer on this subject will make a great difference as to the point of view from which his proposals will be reviewed. With regard to the question of the profits calculated under Schedules D and B, the Chancellor of the Exchequer mentioned a fact which is within my own knowledge—namely, that it is very seldom that farmers keep good enough accounts to satisfy the Revenue as to whether or not they are making the profits which they are alleged to make. I think it would assist farmers very considerably if the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or some other Gentleman on the Treasury Bench, would shortly state under what main headings the Government would like farmers to show the accounts of their revenue. The question is a difficult one, but I think they should know that, in order that they may obtain the full benefit of the remission which the Chancellor of the Exchequer wishes they should have. I am not quite certain whether the right hon. Gentleman gave us in his Estimate the amount which he expects the Revenue to lose from this change, or, in other words, whether he stated the amount which the farmers would gain. I would ask him whether he can let us know what the amount will be? These, then, are two practical questions which I wish to put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think there is some further credit due to the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the separation of the local loans from other accounts. This is a point which I do not think has yet been mentioned in the discussion. It appears to me to be a most apposite proposal, at this particular time, when we are about to entrust greatly enlarged powers to local authorities, that the country should be able to draw a distinction between local and Imperial funds. Unless some such proposal be adopted we should very soon get into a complication of accounts compared with which the facts stated by the right hon. Gentleman would be of small magnitude indeed. I think, therefore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has done a real service to the country in separating those funds. I should like to say one word, as an independent Member, on the question of economy in the Naval and Military Services. It appears to me that, in the speech which the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) delivered in this House, he stated the undoubted truth when he said that economy ought to be combined with efficiency; but he did not indicate one single item in which the Estimates could be reduced without sacrificing efficiency to economy. The only point in which, as far as I could gather, the noble Lord desired that the Estimates should be reduced was in regard to coaling stations. Now, Sir, I do protest against anything being done by this House which would have the effect of rendering less secure the coaling stations, which are, as it were, the only stepping-stones upon which your war vessels can cross the ocean to the help of your Colonies in times of war. I should like to see some part of the surplus asked for by the Admiralty in order to strengthen the coaling stations. Although we all agree that economy and efficiency are admirable things, I do hope that those Gentlemen who criticize the Estimates in this House will show us how we can have the one without sacrificing the other. One suggestion was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) as to an economy which might be practised in regard to the £5,000,000 a-year we are now spending on Non-Effective Services in connection with the Army. But I would point out that the arrangement under which this £5,000,000 has grown up proceeded from right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench; and, therefore, we must leave them to settle among themselves the policy which dictated it. If I remember aright, it is the short-service system that has retired so many officers whilst in the prime of life, and has left upon the country the pensions which hon. Gentlemen opposite so much object to. Except on these points, there has not been a single direction pointed out in which these Estimates can be reduced.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I will just reply to the question which the hon. Member has put to me. The 1*s*. will be levied upon the paid-up capital of Companies. I must apologize to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) for not having answered the question he put to me with regard to the simplification of the accounts. That is a matter to which I will give my closest attention. I admit that the accounts are not as well understood as they ought to be, and if I can simplify them I shall be very willing to do so. As to the question that has been asked respecting the proposal made with regard to Schedule D, it appears to me that Chambers of Agriculture and those who are conversant with these subjects will be able to render considerable assistance in that matter.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham): In deference to the interests of the people of India, I have to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will be pleased to consider favourably the remission of the duty on the silver work imported from India to England? I am aware that this matter has been, in former discussions, mixed up with the question of hall-marking. But I do not wish so to mix it up. Personally, I am in favour of the system of hall-marking, as insuring public confidence in the articles so marked. But if this process is found to be too rough for the delicate silver fabrics of India, then some other mechanism can be found for assaying the purity and quality of these fabrics. Sir, the remission of this duty was proposed by a Committee of this House in 1879. It was mentioned in the Budget Speech of 1881. A more recent discussion took place in this House in May, 1884. On that occasion the hon. and learned Member for Chatham (Sir John Gorst) spoke as follows:—

> "He wished to bring a little friendly pressure to bear upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to this subject. . . . . It was admitted on all hands that this tax ought to be abolished. The Government themselves had in three successive years proposed to abolish it. The only reason that it existed appeared to be

the difficulty of dealing with the question of drawback. If, as the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Slagg) stated, £100,000 could settle this matter, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would, he thought, be delighted to settle it on those terms."—(3 *Hansard*, [288] 463-4,)

Now, Sir, the hon. and learned Gentleman has become Under Secretary of State for India. I hope he will exercise his benign influence in the direction indicated by him in 1884. I know that £100,000 may not cover, perhaps, the whole amount of drawback that would have to be allowed. This drawback is, in fact, a refund of the duty which would have to be allowed in the event of the duty being remitted. Otherwise, the unsold silver which had paid duty would be placed at a disadvantage in competition with the silver which, by the remission of duty, would be excused from payment. Still, the drawback would not be allowed to every holder, nor to all silver; but only to silver duty-paid and unsold at the time in the stores of the silver merchants. On this point, in May, 1884, the hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney)—of whom I desire to speak with special respect in your presence, and who was then Secretary to the Treasury—made a useful suggestion which I will quote, to the effect—

> "That some understanding should be arrived at with the big dealers in gold and silver plate as to the terms on which their claims for drawback could reasonably be met."—(*Ibid.* 470.)

Sir, I am sure that in that way the question may be arranged with great satisfaction to the importers, and with justice to the claims of India, for which four main reasons may, in brief, be adduced. First, this silver work is a manufacture of extraordinary beauty, which, if unfettered, may attain great popularity in England. Secondly, the trade between India and England has, on the one hand, stimulated the exportation of raw produce, but has extinguished many of the ancient Indian manufactures. I cannot complain of this process of trade and industry; but I urge it as a reason why we should maintain, so far as we fairly can, those characteristic and interesting manufactures which still remain. Thirdly, India has been generous to British interests in remitting all duties on the importation of British manufactures. And, fourthly, this Indian silver work does not compete with any articles manufactured in England; but if allowed a fair field, without any fiscal burden, it will make its way in England and hold its own there.

Sir WILLIAM HARCOURT: I think that as it is getting late it will be a great convenience to the Committee if some Member of the Government will tell us on what day the debate will be resumed, as the Committee will be anxious to make their arrangements. Will it be taken on Monday; and, if not, what Business will be taken on that day?

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I think, Sir, it will be more convenient if I state to-morrow afternoon, at half-past 4, what Business will be taken on Monday. It had been intended to take Supply on Monday; but if it should be more convenient to the Committee generally that the Budget Resolutions should be agreed to on Monday I should wish to meet those views.

Mr. GOSCHEN: In reply to my hon. Friend behind me (Sir Richard Temple), I may say that two days ago, if he had raised this question, I should have told him that I was going to deal with the matter in my Budget, and that I was going to make a proposal which I thought was favourable to the introduction of Indian silver into this country. At the last moment, however, a difficulty arose which prevented me from doing so. If I should see my way to deal with the subject I will certainly do so.

Colonel BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): I am sorry, Mr. Courtney, to detain the Committee at this late hour; but I think that the statement which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) as to the increase of the normal expenditure on the Army and Navy should not pass unchallenged. I consider that when this subject is dealt with the Committee ought to be furnished with the normal expenditure per head of the population, instead of being referred, as we always are, to bygone days, when the population was far less than it is now, and when the needs of the country were also far less. The reason why I ask whether the normal expenditure has increased is this—it is very difficult for anyone to find out exactly what is the normal expenditure. But, at the end of 1883, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), in a speech he made at Pontefract, boasted that he had saved 2*s.* 11*d.* per head of the population in that expenditure since 1870. The right hon. Gentleman's contention, therefore, amounted to this—that between 1870 and 1883 the normal expenditure of the country upon the Naval and Military Forces had declined by that amount. Various circumstances have occurred since 1883. The Forces in India have had to be increased by 10,000 men, on account of a changed state of conditions on the frontier, and there has been considerable expenditure in Egypt. I contend, however, that it has yet to be proved that the really normal expenditure of the Army and Navy—estimated as I have contended it ought to be estimated—has increased, and I would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state, in the next debate on the subject of Army and Navy expenditure, if that is the case or not?

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolved, That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable on Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say): on

Tea . .	the pound .	Sixpence.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will print a statement respecting his Budget scheme.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes; I will print it as soon as possible.

Resolution to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again *To-morrow.*

CRIMINAL LAW (SCOTLAND) PROCEDURE (No. 2) BILL.

(*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.*)

[BILL 196.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time. Sir, I shall not detain the House with many observations, for I understand there is a general feeling among the Scotch Members, in relation to the Bill, that any Amendment can be readily made in Committee, and that the general principles of the Bill are satisfactory. I will, however, just state, in two or three words, what is the object of the Bill. It is, with one small exception, a Bill for simplifying and amending procedure, by making indictments less complex. Another general object of the Bill is to extend in Scotland a system which has worked well for many years. In the Sheriffs' Courts, in jury cases, there are two diets; and in the first, where the prisoner pleads guilty, the cases are at once disposed of, thus saving the considerable expense of the attendance of witnesses. The introduction of this plan has saved the country £1,800 a-year, and there will be practically as great, if not a greater, saving by the extension of the system to the other Courts. Then, Sir, we propose to make some arrangements by which the trials of cases of importance may take place in the localities in which the alleged offences have taken place. That is carrying out what is really the ancient law of Scotland. Such trials will be conducted by one of the Judges of the Supreme Court; and, in order to carry out this proposal, all the Judges of the Court of Session will conduct criminal cases as well as civil. In return, it is proposed to make a small addition to the salaries of the Judges, and to take away all allowances for Circuit expenses, requiring the Judges to meet these charges out of salary; but I may mention, in regard to that, that it will not cause any extra expense, as the saving made by the other simplifying provisions of the Bill would far more than cover this small addition to the salaries of the Judges. There is another matter I think I ought to refer to. It is our intention, by this Bill, to remove an anomaly which is felt seriously in Scotland. It is that, in the case of crimes committed by persons who have been previously convicted, previous convictions cannot be used to show aggravation, because, although the crimes are similar in character, they are not exactly the same. The result is that persons who have been previously convicted, and have again committed a heinous offence, are treated in the same way as first offenders, and receive short sentences; whereas, for the good of the State, they ought, in consequence of their previous convictions, to receive much longer sentences, and sentences adequate to the gravity of the offence. These are the general provisions of the Bill, and I have now to move its second reading.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time,"—(*The Lord Advocate*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Bill read a second time, and *committed* for *Thursday* 5th May.

METROPOLITAN OPEN SPACES ACT (1881) EXTENSION BILL.—[BILL 214.]

(*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Dalrymple, Sir Charles Forster, Mr. Houldsworth, Mr. Reid, Sir Albert Rollit, and Mr. Salt.*)

CONSIDERATION.

Bill, as amended, *considered.*

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I rise, Sir, to move the clause which stands in my name, and which, I believe, practically meets the views of hon. Members. It is desired to extend this Bill to Ireland, and this clause is thereby rendered necessary.

Clause (Saving for Crown Lands and other lands,)—(*Colonel King-Harman,*)—*brought up*, and read the first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I wish to say I entirely assent to this clause.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Clause read a second time, and *added* to the Bill.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I believe it would be very desirable that the clause standing in the name of the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. W. H. James) should be inserted, as the Bill will apply to a number of these cases. I beg, therefore, to move it.

MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Baronet that this clause ought properly to be moved by the hon. Gentleman in whose name it stands; and I must point out to the House that, in his absence, I do not think it can be moved.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Can it not be done by the general consent of the House?

MR. SPEAKER: It would introduce an inconvenient precedent.

Clause (Application of Acts,)—*Mr. Murphy,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time, amended, and *added.*

Clause,—

(Power over open spaces already vested in sanitary authority.)

"The Metropolitan Board or the sanitary authority may exercise all the powers given to them by the said Act or this Act respecting open spaces, churchyards, cemeteries, and burial grounds transferred to them in pursuance of the said Act or of this Act in respect of any open spaces, churchyards, cemeteries, and burial grounds of a similar nature which are or shall be vested in them in pursuance of any other statute or of which they are otherwise the owners.

"The Metropolitan Board of Works or the sanitary authority may purchase or take on lease, lay out, plant, improve, and maintain lands for the purpose of being used as public walks or pleasure grounds, and may support or contribute to the support of public walks or pleasure grounds provided by any person whomsoever.

"It shall and may be lawful for the Metropolitan Board of Works or the sanitary authority, for the purposes of this Act, to narrow such roads as the borough surveyor may report to be unnecessarily wide, and to stop up any roads which may appear to them to be useless,—(*Mr. Murphy,*)

—*brought up*, and read the first and second time.

Amendment made.

Amendment proposed, in line 8, to leave out the words "or the sanitary authority."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

MR. MURPHY: I think there is some doubt about the advisability of omitting these words. The omission may lead to some difficulty, and it cannot do any harm, even if they prove a surplusage.

MR. CHANCE: I think it will be found that in Ireland the Sanitary Authorities have not the same powers as those in England. It would be better to allow them to remain.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The words are exactly copied from the Act. I think there would be great objection to retaining them. This is one of the inconveniences of the course of attempting to apply to Ireland a Bill drawn for England.

Mr. CHANCE: Suppose we add the words "in Ireland."

Mr. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): Or "any sanitary authority."

Mr. RITCHIE: I will agree to that, and will withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, *withdrawn.*

Amendment made.

Clause, as amended, *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Clause (Power to Corporation to make free gift of land for open space),—(*Mr. Houldsworth,*)—*brought up*, and read the first and second time.

Mr. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): Perhaps I ought to give a short explanation in regard to this clause. A similar clause was proposed in Committee, but exception was taken to the unlimited power it proposed to give. That has now been guarded against by inserting words which provide that a Corporation can only put its powers in force under this clause with the consent of other superior corporate bodies. I think there can be now no objection to the clause, and I am sure it will prove of great value in carrying out the intentions of the Act of Parliament.

Mr. CHANCE: I understand very great objection was taken to the clause in Committee, and as it was then considered undesirable to pass it, I shall, therefore, resist it now.

Mr. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton): I took objection to this clause in Committee. Now, as it provides that no Corporation can act without getting the consent of the Lords of the Treasury, I hope the objection to it will not be persisted in.

Clause *agreed to*, and *added* to the Bill.

Further Amendments made.

Bill to be read the third time *Tomorrow.*

House adjourned at a quarter before Two o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 22nd *April*, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Public Bills—*Second Reading*—Irish Land Law (58).

Committee—Report—Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) (63).

Provisional Order Bill — *Third Reading* — Local Government (Ireland) (Limerick Water* (42), and *passed.*

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 63.)

(*The Lord Privy Seal, Earl Cadogan.*)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to order).

Lord FITZGERALD said, that the recent transference of Chief Justice Morris to the Queen's Bench Division rendered this Bill necessary, in order to place the Superior Courts in Ireland on the same footing as in England. He did not propose to inquire in the least degree who would be the new Puisne Judge; but he wished to point out that, under the Irish Land Bill, the Government asked that a Common Law Judge should be asked to act occasionally on the Land Commission. Now, the new Judge could not be called on to undertake this office without his consent; and he, therefore, thought an honourable engagement should be entered into with the new Judge that he would be ready, if required, to give up the comparative ease of the Queen's Bench Division for the hard work of the Land Commission. There would thus be an opportunity of saving one Judge at least, and, at the same time, of strengthening the Land Commission. No doubt, the Irish Bench was at present over-manned, and admitted of great consolidation; but his object was not to reduce it below 10, but to enter on a course of gradually letting the excrescences of the present system die out. It was absolutely necessary to take the matter in hand speedily, and it might be worth while to appoint a Committee to inquire into the matter.

The LORD CHANCELLOR of IRELAND (Lord Ashbourne) said, he thought that some of the suggestions of the noble and learned Lord were most valuable, and that with reference to consolidation was extremely important. They were partly connected with the debate on the Irish Land Bill, which was about to be resumed, and they had been put forward in the Report of the Cowper Commission. The provision relative to consolidation was, however, one which required very careful examination.

Bill *reported*, without Amendment; and to be read 3ª on *Thursday* next.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL.—(No. 58.)

(*The Lord Privy Seal, Earl Cadogan.*)

SECOND READING. [ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate on the Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading, read.

Debate *resumed* accordingly.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: It is one of the many calamities under which Ireland has so long suffered that measures affecting that unfortunate country are never discussed on their own merits. We are always confronted with the difficulty of some desperate political crisis. No one, however, can deny that the discussion last night was limited almost exclusively to the merits of the Bill, and that on behalf of the Irish landowners it was conducted in the best and most liberal spirit. There was only three speeches last night in which allusion was made to the political situation. First of all, there was the speech of the late Lord Lieutenant (Earl Spencer), who secured for himself so much just merit for his government of Ireland, although he governed the country through the instrumentality of an exceptionally severe Coercion Bill. My noble Friend spoke with the calmness and dignity with which he always speaks. It was extremely well done, but the object of his speech was obvious; it was to disparage the Bill as much as possible without committing himself to any alternative policy. But at the end of his speech there was a single sentence which, like the postscript in a lady's letter, contained the whole substance of what he intended to convey. He challenged the Government to say whether they would stand or fall by this Bill, and that challenge was utterly inconsistent with the whole previous tone of his remarks. Then there was the speech of the noble Viscount (Viscount De Vesci); and then there came the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Ripon), flourishing his shillelagh—a Yorkshire shillelagh—with some mildness in it, no doubt; but the whole gist of his remarks consisted of a repetition of the challenge whether the Government intended to stand or fall by this Bill. In the speech of the noble Marquess there was a clear indication of his political view. Of course we know where this challenge came from. We have all read a speech delivered before an assembly of gentlemen who call themselves the Eighty Club. The challenges of the two noble Lords on the Front Opposition Bench were mere repetitions of the passionate appeal made to the worshipful company of the Eighty Club. Now, it would be mere affectation, and worse than affectation, to pretend any longer that we can discuss this Bill without any reference to the political situation. We cannot discuss the measure simply on its merits, and I wish to say distinctly that I intend to discuss it with reference to the general political position. It would be worse than a farce not to do so. Before going further I wish to say a few words of sincere regret at my separation from my noble Friend (Earl Granville) who leads the Opposition. We have sat together for the best part of 30 years, and together have faced the battle and the breeze, and it is with the sincerest sorrow that I now find myself separated from him. Until now we have never had any difference, public or private; but I am obliged to look at the position which my noble Friend has assumed. The other night my noble Friend taunted the Government with their alliance with Lord Hartington, and referred to the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury) as being all-powerful in this House in the present circumstances. The noble Marquess, as Leader of the Conservative Party, has always great power in this House; but why is his power at the present moment even greater than usual? Because a great portion of those whom my noble Friend (Earl Granville) has been accustomed to lead dread above all things the return to power of my noble Friend and his former Colleagues. My noble Friend has a right to take his own course, and to repudiate all the principles on which we have acted together for so many years; but we, too, have a right to take our own course, and we ask him this—Does he think it less honourable for the Conservative Party to lean on the support of Lord Hartington than for him and his former Colleagues to lean on the support of Mr. Parnell? Look at the position in which my noble Friend and his Colleagues are placed. They were beaten in the House of Commons the other night by a majority of 108. If Mr. Parnell's Party had not been in alliance with them they would have been defeated by a majority so enormous as to be almost unprecedented in the annals of this country—a majority of at least one-third of the whole House of Commons. Seeing, then, that my noble Friend and his Colleagues are in close alliance with Mr. Parnell, I ask—Does he think it more honourable for the political Opposition to be dependent on Mr. Parnell than for the Conservative Government to be dependent on Lord Hartington? I have never heard that Lord Hartington has been suspected of disloyalty to the Empire; I have never heard such language applied to him as Mr. Gladstone applied some time ago to Mr. Parnell. It was at Leeds, I think, that Mr. Gladstone said that Mr. Parnell had great ability, but that it did not require much ability to sway men through their covetous desires. Now, I know of no change of circumstances since the date when that speech was delivered which can justify any change of language; and let my noble Friend take care lest he and his Colleagues should, in their turn, be accused of attempting to sway men through their covetous desires. I proceed to another part of the political situation. I have to think whether my noble Friend and his Colleagues have any plan for the government of Ireland better than that proposed by my noble Friend opposite. Yet my noble Friend and his Colleagues go about the country saying—"We have a plan and the Tory Government have none." Now, it seems to me exactly the reverse. They have no plan, and the Conservative Government have a very definite plan. The Liberal Government had a plan, but their Bills are now dead. They say—"We do not stand on our old Bills; they are dead and gone." One of the most prominent parts of the late Government's scheme was one for purchase, which I entirely approved. I mean that I approved of it with the great object of multiplying owners of land in Ireland. There was a great scheme propounded. I say nothing about the merits of its details, but it was sound in its general principles. What did Mr. Gladstone say the other day? "The Purchase Bill is dead, and dead for ever." Therefore, it is not at all according to the facts of the case that my noble Friend and his Colleagues have any plan as regards the Land Question in Ireland. I cannot say that I entirely endorse the language in which that scheme was propounded; but if there was any part of it which touched the question of personal honour it was that proposal about the land purchase. The proprietors of land in Ireland were to be subjected to a new government, and it was felt that if they desired it they ought to have an opportunity of cutting out. We all know that the Party is in alliance with Mr. Parnell and Mr. Dillon, and we know what some of these men are. Their conduct may be described as consisting of rottenness and confusion in theory and plunder in practice. I think it is quite on the cards that if our old friends came back into Office in alliance with Mr. Parnell we might have them going down and saying to the landlords of Ireland—"We are very sorry for you; we know you have been in Ireland, some of you 500 or 700 years; we know that your names have been associated with the history of Ireland; we know that many of you are loved by the people; but you must go out of the country and allow yourselves to be expropriated by the Government at any price we choose, because you did not accept our offer—an offer which was got up in six weeks and propounded to you. You did not choose to accept it; your sands are run out—we throw you to the sharks." So far as public utterances are concerned, this is all we have a right to expect from noble Lords who have placed themselves under the command of the Parnellite Party. Then we have to discuss the land proposals of noble Lords opposite, knowing what we are very likely to have from my noble Friends near me. Mr. Gladstone is able to speak for himself, and he does speak very copiously and writes very fully. I was much struck by a speech of Mr. John Morley, who is now intimately associated with Mr. Gladstone, and, I believe, knows his opinions. Yesterday, in *The Times*, I read a speech in which Mr. Morley used these words with reference to the position of Mr. Gladstone. Now, I consider that every word Mr. Morley or his Colleagues say Mr. Gladstone also says. They are acting under him and with him, and they will do whatever he bids them. They are his lieutenants, and nothing else. I see no indication of an independent state of mind among them. What does Mr. Morley say with reference to Lord Hartington's position on the Crimes Bill? Lord Hartington says—"The object of this legislation is to put down and clear the way of the revolutionary Party," "meaning," Mr. John Morley added, "by the revolutionary Party, the Party which agrees with Mr. Gladstone." That is an awkward saying, and I hope it will be repudiated, because I do not think it is quite true. Lord Hartington is not a man who uses violent language of his opponents; he was speaking strictly of the revolutionary Party, although my noble Friend and Mr. Gladstone have too close a connection with them not to be suspected of sympathy with them. Then, my Lords, I must again refer to the various speeches which have been lately made by my noble Friend (Earl Spencer) who was lately Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He has been starring in the country like the rest of his Colleagues, who had not always the same sense of responsibility as if they were speaking in this or the other House of Parliament. But I have been extremely astonished by the assertions made and the tone taken by my noble Friend. I have read the speech delivered at Bristol the other day by my noble Friend, in which he referred to the Plan of Campaign, which, he said, he did not altogether approve. Just think what the Plan of Campaign is! It is a combination by a large number of tenants agreeing to pay their debts into a common fund to defend themselves against their creditors. Was there ever a more monstrous form of combination? This is the mealy-mouthed language in which noble Lords, Privy Councillors of the Queen, who have held the highest responsibilities in the State and are aspiring to them again, referred to a scheme of violence so monstrous. What can we expect from them when they come back to Office? Then there is another part of my noble Friend's speech. He says the Plan of Campaign is strictly intended to be limited to the cases where landlords did not give reasonable deductions. Who is to judge of the reasonableness of the demand? What right had my noble Friend to speak of the object of the Plan of Campaign? Does he know how it was drawn up? Was he consulted? Did he draw his description from the actual operation of it? Can my noble Friend say that the operation of the Plan of Campaign is confined to cases of bad landlords? For instance, there is the case of my noble Friend Lord Lansdowne. Could he say he was a bad landlord? Then, I say, is it just, fair, or worthy of my noble Friend's position to go down to the distant Provinces of England to speak thus to men who have not time to read the Blue Books or the evidence?

Earl SPENCER: I do not wish to interrupt my noble Friend, but I hardly know to what report of my speech he is referring.

The Duke of ARGYLL: *The Times.*

Earl SPENCER: That was a very inaccurate report of what I said. I said that in the first speech I made after the trials at Dublin had come to an end I had spoken strongly against the Plan of Campaign, and did not propose on that occasion to go at any length into it. I said there might have been some justification for it, in consequence of the refusal of the Government to accept Mr. Parnell's Bill last year. I then went on to say that the Plan of Campaign, so far as it had been explained, was intended to apply to those unjust landlords who would not listen to reason; but that, as far as I knew, I was afraid that it had gone considerably beyond that.

The Duke of ARGYLL: I am glad to have elicited from my noble Friend this explanation, though I cannot say it is entirely satisfactory. My Lords, if this conduct and principle were applied generally in civilized life society would be at an end. It is the duty of men in high position to use true language, and not to lower themselves to the sixpenny or halfpenny gallery. I say distinctly that I cannot speak or vote on this Bill except with reference to the political position, especially as it has been affected by the Land Act of 1881. I want to bring my noble Friend to the recognition of certain facts as proved before the Cowper

Commission. I wonder how many of your Lordships have read that Blue Book, containing between 27,000 and 28,000 questions and answers, and covering upwards of 1,000 pages. My Lords, I have studied it with some care, and I am very much struck with the existing state of Ireland as affected by the Land Act of 1881. My Lords, what shall I say of the general knowledge in the political world of the failure of the Land Act of 1881? It is acknowledged to be a complete and absolute failure. But I am not satisfied with these general assertions. How many of your Lordships have gone through that Blue Book to see why that Land Act has been a failure? My Lords, let me direct the attention of the House for a moment to this question, which I consider of the very first importance. Now, my Lords, remember what that Act was. It was an Act which placed the whole agricultural property of Ireland, both of landlord and tenant, absolutely at the mercy of three gentlemen. They might fix a fair rent, or a rent at what is called prairie value, or an exorbitant rent. Now the question is, whether it has done harm or good. Now, my Lords, let me call the attention of the House to the evidence of Sir Redvers Buller, and I must say that there has been an extraordinary want of candour in quoting this evidence. Let us remember who Sir Redvers Buller is. He is a distinguished soldier, and probably knows about as much of agriculture as I do of military tactics. A noble Friend near me says, soldiers may know a great deal of agriculture; all I can say is that I have not detected any signs of such knowledge in his evidence. He is a man of perfect honour, straightforwardness, and candour, and what does he say? He says what you want is some measure, some plan, which shall be a make-weight against the love of the Irish peasant for his own home, so that in making a bargain with his landlord there shall be something equivalent to the pressure which the landlord is able to put upon him. That is precisely what it was thought the Land Act of 1881 would give to the Irish peasant, who has an excessive love for his own home; to give him a counterpoise against the landlord in the making of his bargain. But Sir Redvers Buller does not seem to know that the Land Act of 1881 exists. That a gentleman, knowing too, as I am now informed, something of agriculture, should be living for months in Ireland and not know there was a measure precisely answering to the philosophical description he had given of the needs of the Irish peasant speaks volumes for the success of that measure. But in quoting this evidence, and flinging it in the face of the Conservative Party, they omit to say that Sir Redvers Buller says the Land Act is a failure. My Lords, why is this Act a failure? We have abundant evidence in the Blue Book of the Cowper Commission. The administration of the Act was given to men who were called Judges, but they had no legal principles laid down for their guidance. The words "fair rent" were used, but no definition of those words was given. Now, my Lords, in Scotland the meaning of the words "fair rent" is not uncertain, because the Judges have decided what it means, because the Statute indicates clearly what that meaning is—it means the fair market value; in Ireland it does not, and was not intended to, have that meaning. Let me ask the House whether the evidence before the Cowper Commission shows an acceptance of these rents as judicial? In 1882 in the North of Ireland a land conference was held, and the conclusion come to was that the decisions of the Sub-Commissioners did not adequately protect the tenants in their holdings. That was a very serious decision, involving, of course, an utter mistrust of the judicial character of this Commission. Now, that was before the great drop in the prices of produce. The Government appoint the Sub-Commissioners, and they change them from time to time. I must say that a more formidable instrument of political corruption was never placed in the hands of any Government. It was quite impossible that the people of Ireland should have been satisfied with such a measure as that. After all, Irishmen are not all unreasonable beings, and the conclusions I have referred to might have been drawn from the proceedings of the Land Commission by the most simple and the most ignorant men. In one case a Sub-Commissioner is supposed to have valued 137 acres of land in an hour, being at the rate of one field in two minutes, including the buildings upon the holding. I have had some experience myself in valuing land,

and in my opinion a valuation conducted in that way is utterly worthless and is a farce. My own strong impression is that the Sub-Commissioners intended to do their duty; but the question is, what was the state of mind in which they came to value the land? It is impossible to expect that people will value an Act which they believe is administered for political purposes, and which they believe is based upon no principle whatever. No real opportunity has ever been given under that Act for the real valuation of the land. It was the hollowness of the pretence at valuation of the land that was one of the chief causes of the failure of that Act. Evidence was given before the Cowper Commission to show that the effect of the Land Act had been to cheapen the value of land. That may be true as regards the rent paid to the landowner, but it is not true as regards the sum paid by the incoming to the outgoing tenant. Not one farthing of advantage is enjoyed by the incoming tenant, inasmuch as the outgoing tenant obtains the highest possible sum for the right of occupation. In all cases where the tenant is free to sell the effect of the Land Act has been to raise the price of tenant right higher than ever; and, indeed, a case came before the Cowper Commission where the tenant's right was valued at 40 years' purchase. The value of this right appears to rise in proportion as the holding is the more miserable. The result is that the new tenant comes in crippled in means, if not hampered with a large debt for money borrowed to enable him to purchase the right of the outgoing tenant. Is there any advantage in that to the public, to the Irish people, or to the nation? It must be recollected that before the Land Act was passed the value of the tenant right was limited by various local customs, and that those customs have been swept away by that Act, and that thus the value of the tenant right is now liable to be forced up to the highest possible point. Therefore, so far from the value of land having been lowered by the Land Act it has largely increased, at all events as regards the smaller holdings. Then, let me ask, what has been the result of the Land Act upon the system known as conacre under which the tenant sub-lets a portion of his holding to his labourers? The labourer has not the protection of judicial rents; he has to pay what the tenant chooses to demand of him, and frequently he pays for the hire of the land for nine months, during which he grows his only crop, potatoes, £4, £5, or £6 an acre for land which the tenant who has received that amount of rent informs his landlord he is unable to pay his judicial rent of £2 an acre for. The fact is that you cannot regulate the price of land any more than you can regulate the price of money. If you try to do it, it is like water that runs through your fingers. If you give an absolute monopoly to the existing tenants in Ireland of all the land they hold they will exact the utmost farthing from the labourers below them. Now, let me direct the attention of the House to another result of the Land Act. All witnesses say that the real difficulty in Ireland lies in a few spots, what are called the congested districts, where you find the old cottier tenancies. The Land Act has had the effect of stereotyping for ever that miserable system of conacre. By abolishing the power of the landlord over the tenant you abolish the possibility of reform for ever. I have had some personal experience with regard to land, and I know that there is nothing so desperate and so inveterate as custom among a half-civilized people. You may show them to demonstration that some practice is folly; but they cannot and will not take it in. But you do not require the consent of one man alone—you require the consent of the whole community in the matter of carrying out improvements. You have destroyed all the interest and power which has led to modern civilization with regard to land. Mr. Seebohm, in his book, has shown that in this country we should have a pauper tenantry had it not been for the creation of freehold tenure. What is the remedy which my noble Friends below me on that Bench propose? It is to give the whole of the Land Question into the hands of Mr. Dillon. Now, my Lords, there was another direct and immediate effect of the Land Act, and that was the sudden inflation of rent. The Act held out an irresistible temptation to borrow money, and many of them borrowed it at enormous interest from the gombeen man. That was the immediate effect of your Act; you have a disastrous reaction now. The banks, to a great extent, have withdrawn their credit, and many of the merchants have done the same, and the consequence is that misery which has produced so much discontent in Ireland. There is another lamentable result of such legislation. You are putting a stop to all agricultural improvements by the landlord. The miseries of the Irish tenants with regard to the condition of their holdings have not come from English law, but from the absence of English law; they are not suffering from landlordism, but from the absence of landlordism and of that control which has been of so much advantage to civilization in this country. All the evidence taken before the Commission is conclusive on this point, that on many estates in Ireland large sums of money were laid out in improvements. Now, look at the case of Lord Clancarty, which shows the mischievous effect of your legislation. On the Clancarty estate a great outfall was made—one of the things which is most required in the case of great plains of bogs, which cannot be drained without such an outfall. It was a most valuable improvement, and the greatest service he could render to his country. I was myself the proprietor of such land. There were a few smaller proprietors whose lands also touched the marsh; we joined together and made an outfall into which the tenants' lands could be drained. But we did this because we trusted to the law of property, to the common sense of the Parliament of the country, and to the security of the law. Now, look at the case of Lord Clancarty. You send one of your Sub-Commissions down; they were asked whether they did not put a rent upon the tenant corresponding to the advantage he gained from the work of the landlord, and their reply was—"Oh, dear no, because there is no machinery for it in our Act; it does not matter whether the tenant is idle or imprudent. The land must be taken as it is now; we have no authority to do anything else." I ask, was there ever such accursed legislation? Conquerors have ravaged the cities of a country and plundered its Princes; but they have left the agrarian system untouched, and when the conqueror withdrew his foot the natural motives of mankind restored immediately the fertility of the land, and crops grew again. But you have cursed Ireland with a perpetual curse; you have destroyed ownership; you have not merely transferred it from one class to another. Do not talk to me of dual ownership; you have destroyed ownership, something that is unknown in any country in the world. You have got a system which is destructive to all improvements, which stereotypes everything that is bad, and makes reforms impossible. There is another point to which I would call your Lordships' attention with regard to the action of the Land Act, and that is, that it has stopped the flow of capital into Ireland. Nobody but a tenant can buy land now; anyone else would be an idiot if he laid out money in the purchase of Irish land. You have stopped all outlay upon improvements, and you have also excluded for ever any capital that would have been brought in from a richer country. Do not tell me that the Irish labourer is incapable of labour, or energy, or exertion. Place him in favourable circumstances, and there is no better workman than the Irishman. I have myself employed large gangs of Irishmen, and I never saw any navvies work better; and, besides that, they were kindly and courteous men. Now, let me look at the effect of the Land Act. There is ample evidence that you have not only damaged Ireland in her material interests, but you have damaged her for ever—as long, at all events, as such principles are carried into effect. Honesty is not regarded, and the honest and thrifty man is discouraged by the idle, the drunken, and the profligate. The village ruffian commands in every district of Ireland under the rule of the League. Look at the evidence of General Buller, in which he talks of the bad characters who carry out the orders of the League. Look at the evidence of some of these witnesses with regard to improvements. The tenants do not improve their holdings because they think they will get more by agitating. Why should they go on laboriously digging, they say; plunder is better than work? Now, my Lords, with regard to the remedy of purchase. I am very much struck with this. No doubt some of the more respectable tenants in Ireland will purchase and do purchase, and I hope many more will purchase; but the poor cottier tenantry cannot purchase, or, if they have purchased, will they not subdivide, as before? I know of nothing to prevent them. Now, my Lords, I turn to utilize all these facts to the excuse of my noble Friend's answer. I cannot defend the Bill on abstract principle; but it is an extension of the Land Act of 1881. Well, my Lords, I confess that as regards the working of the Act, when it becomes law, I think there will be all the difficulty which attends the valuation of land. With regard to the admission of leaseholders, I acquiesce in the general opinion of Irish landlords. They all seem to think it quite a natural consequence. They do not care about it. I take the opportunity of entering my protest against it on principle. Men say very loosely—What, after all, is the difference between a yearly tenant and a tenant under a lease? Why, the difference is this—that the yearly tenant has a far smaller interest in the holding. In the case of leases you have capable and intelligent men who in return for a long tenure calculate on an average of value, and promise that throughout a certain number of years they will pay a certain rent. But I am bound to say, for myself, that I will never vote for any Bill—I will never say "Content" to any Bill—which violates good faith between man and man. With regard to the principle of bankruptcy, though I am no judge of the workability of the clauses with reference to the Bankruptcy Law of Ireland and the bankruptcy machinery, I do see a certain value in the principle of those clauses, and that is this—that a man shall not cease to pay his rent to his landlord unless he is considered also a bankrupt to everybody else. A man should be under the stigma of bankruptcy who cannot pay his landlord as the man who cannot pay his merchant or usurer. There is a value in that principle, and I must say that though it is a very disagreeable thing for an Irish tenant to be called a bankrupt, and to be released from all his obligations to other creditors, it is a fair strain to put a man under who can pay his rent and will not. Some objections have been made to the Bankruptcy Clauses, which seem to have a certain amount of reason in them, and I hope my noble Friend who is in charge of the Bill and the noble Marquess will look carefully into the possibility of modifying those clauses. For my own part, as regards the great alternative which was before the Government—that of either breaking up the whole of the Land Act of 1881 or making occasional remissions of rent where the local Courts see cause for it—I think the noble Marquess has chosen the right course. In my opinion, the proposal of the Commission to have a quinquennial revision of rent would be fatal to the peace of the country. I think I can see cases where it is quite obvious that, either owing to a certain fall in prices or other causes, the tenant is really unable to pay his rent, and it is possible in this case that the County Court might be able in some cases to judge. Before I sit down I would only say a few words with regard to the challenge which has been repeatedly thrown out on these Benches that the Government will say that they stand or fall by this Bill. My Lords, I look upon that challenge as a mere Party move. It is a cry of faction and nothing else. I hope the Government will resist it. I am quite certain they proposed this Bill with an honest intention. The admission of leaseholders seems to me to meet with the acquiescence of the Irish landlords. With a generosity of feeling and a public spirit which I think does them infinite honour, they are casting no difficulty in the way, and this will affect no less than upwards of 150,000 tenants. I hope the public will be reminded of this—that it is not to the interests of Ireland or for the interests of the Empire that insolvent men should be kept in a solvent position. It is the interest not only of the landowner, but of the Empire, that the soil of the country should be in the hands of capable, industrious, and solvent men. It is a sickly sentimentality which wishes to keep stereotyped on the soil of the West of Ireland a vast mass of men who cannot live upon the land, who cannot live without labour, and at the same time to keep them under conditions in which labour is impossible and inaccessible. Now, my Lords, I have only one more word to say, and that is, I do earnestly hope that it will be possible even for a short time to put aside the spirit of faction in regard to this agrarian question in Ireland. I have no very strong hopes of it.

A noble LORD: Yes.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: I hear a noble Lord say "Yes," and that comes from my noble Friend who last Session of Parliament said that the great difficulty was that it was impossible to exclude the spirit of faction.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Hear, hear!

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL: Well, let him begin with himself. There is no man in this House whose knowledge of Ireland is greater, whose acuteness of mind is greater, or who, I believe, knows more thoroughly the truth of the principles which I have endeavoured to lay down. I do not believe that my noble Friend believes in the success of the Land Act of 1881, or in any amendment of it. What we must look to is purchase, because we must look to the restoration of that which you have destroyed—the restoration of full ownership in the soil. That is the one principle of industry which has been the root of all improvements, and to this, by some means or another, it will be necessary that we should return.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My noble Friend who has just sat down has spoken for an hour and a-half. He divided his speech into three parts. The first was a political attack on the Opposition, the second was a violent attack on the Act of 1881, and then followed the third part, which related to the Bill before the House. I hope the Government will note how long my noble Friend took in referring to the Bill; it was just seven minutes. A speech of an hour and a-half, short of seven minutes, was devoted to a very strong attack upon his former Colleagues, and upon the Act which, whatever its merits or demerits, is the law now, and the basis on which all future legislation must rest. I do not accuse my noble Friend of faction, but I must say that I think he has most unnecessarily and unwisely dragged into the discussion on this Bill the whole conduct of political Parties in reference to the Irish Question. I do not desire to follow the noble Duke in this course, but I cannot avoid saying something in answer to the Party attack which he has made. The noble Duke began by saying that my noble Friends the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the late Viceroy of India imparted much political bitterness to their speeches. As to the speech of the noble Earl (Earl Spencer), I would appeal to noble Lords whether it was not a remarkably calm and temperate speech, and as to the speech of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Ripon) the noble Duke chiefly found fault with it because the noble Marquess asked the Government what portions of the Bill they stood or fell by—what they regarded as the essential part of the Bill? That is a very ordinary question, and I fail to see why it should have raised the ire of the noble Duke. He next proceeded to contrast the position of the Government, who have the support of Lord Hartington—for which I envy them, for no one has a greater admiration for Lord Hartington than I have—with the position of the Opposition, who are associated with Mr. Parnell and his followers. I suppose, since the charge is made, that it is considered extremely wicked on the part of the Opposition to have the support of Mr. Parnell and his friends. But I can remember when we were in Office that the Party opposite had the support of Mr. Parnell and his friends, who rendered that support so effectively as to remove us from Office. I make no accusation against them for that. So far from its being matter of charge against us that we have the support of Mr. Parnell and 85 Irish Members, I consider that the great justification of our Irish policy. But a policy must be judged by itself. If it is right, there is nothing to be ashamed of in Mr. Parnell's alliance; if it is wrong, then it will not be made better by being supported by this or that man. The noble Duke referred to the Land Purchase Bill which was brought in by us, and he seemed to take it for granted that if we were to return to Office we should abandon all proposals of the kind. Let me remind him, now that he is so enamoured of that Bill, that the noble and learned Earl formerly Lord Chancellor was the first to attack it by writing a vigorous letter to *The Times* couched in the most adverse spirit. I may be allowed to state that I am not aware that any of my former Colleagues have swerved from their belief that any just settlement of the Irish Question must be accompanied by a settlement of the Land Question. We are, no doubt, relieved from being pinned to the details of the particular Bill; but that a satisfactory dealing with the Land Question must be part of any satisfactory settlement of the great Irish question I believe we all of us hold to. Reference has been made to the Plan of Campaign, and, as it is considered the duty of every public man on all occasions to express his opinion concerning it, I have no hesitation in saying that I condemn it. But I must add that its origin may, to some extent, be traced to the fact that Parliament rejected Mr. Parnell's Bill last autumn. I am one of those who do not believe that we shall advance nearer to the solution of the Irish Question by indulging in purely Party recriminations and bandying charges of inconsistency. It is quite easy for any of us to bring forward quotations in support of such charges. I, however, make no charge of inconsistency against my noble Friend. The noble Duke opposed the Land Act of 1881 from the first, and he does so still. He asks me to say whether I still approve that Act. I conscientiously believe that that Act was based on sound and necessary principles. Our difficulties in Ireland have in the past been mainly due to our determination to apply to Ireland principles which worked well in England, but which were inapplicable to Ireland. The Land Act of 1881 was a departure from that course. I believe that, at the time of the passing of the Act rents were exorbitantly high, and that if it had not been for the machinery provided by that Act it would have been impossible to bring them down to a reasonable amount. The noble Duke says that the evidence given before the Cowper Commission proves the Act to have failed. I admit that, in consequence of the fall in prices, the rents fixed three or four years ago are now too high. I think there is abundant evidence to show that the rents fixed under the Land Act were not unfairly reduced—that a reduction of 18 per cent was not by any means unreasonable. Those who object to what has been done under the Land Act in Ireland ought to consider the circumstances of agriculture in England. Does 18 per cent represent the fall in prices in many parts of England? In Ireland no one foresaw that there would be so rapid and continuous a fall in prices. The witnesses called before Lord Cowper's Commission tell us that not only has there been a greater fall than was ever anticipated, but that you have a state of great instability in regard to prices, which renders it impossible to calculate with any certainty what will be a fair rent for any length of time; and this is equally true of England and Scotland. My noble Friend goes to India for a comparison, and says that, although we are the conquerors of that country, we have never attempted to interfere with its system of land tenure. I am surprised to hear such a statement from the noble Duke. Has he never heard of the settlement of Oude, by which wide changes were effected in the land tenure? One of the statements of my noble Friend is that among the results of the Land Act of 1881 is a large increase in the value of tenant right. The Report of the Commission, however, contains evidence negativing that supposition. Witnesses from Armagh, for example, proved that tenant right has fallen greatly in value. I will now make some observations upon the provisions of the Bill itself. I agree that it is desirable that leaseholders should have the benefits of the Act of 1881; but I believe that the provisions which have been introduced into this measure with respect to this subject will cause considerable hardship. It is proposed to convert into yearly tenants all leaseholders whose leases will expire within 60 years from the passing of the Act of 1881. Now, there may be leaseholders who do not wish to be converted into yearly tenants. Why should they not be given the option of deciding whether they will take advantage of the provisions of the Bill, or whether their position shall remain unchanged? It would be a great misfortune if, in attempting to redress the grievances of the leaseholders, we should, in reality, injure their interests, though unwittingly. I turn next to the consideration of the Bankruptcy Clauses of the Bill. It has been placed on record by the Land Commission that the judicial rents fixed under the Act of 1881 are, in many cases, too high. This declaration has caused the Government some embarrassment, by forcing upon their notice the feasibility of breaking the statutory term fixed no longer ago than 1881. They think that the difficulty has been met by the introduction of these Bankruptcy Clauses; but in this they are wrong, because these clauses will leave untouched the cases of men who shrink from bankruptcy. The men who are anxious to pay their rents, but for whom it is very difficult to do so, are the very men whom it is most desirable to benefit, and yet this Bill will do very little for them. Another objection to these clauses is that they are almost unworkable. A tenant, after he has been declared bankrupt, will become a kind of bondsman to the Official Assignee. That, in itself, is an extraordinary position in which to place a tenant. Then we have been told that we may expect in one single County Court District as many as 4,000 applications under these Bankruptcy Clauses, and in every one of these cases it will be necessary to keep a separate account. The process will be that the tenant will come year after year, and producing, perhaps, some small portion of the rent. He will be asked why he did not pay more; and then there will be an execution of the bankruptcy proceedings. The result will be that you will have a set of Government tenants under the Official Assignee, composed of the poorest and most wretched in Ireland. Can anything be conceived more likely to embarrass landlords and tenants alike? Can this be otherwise described than as a most demoralizing system? My object is not to denounce the Government, but to prove that these clauses will not effect the object they have in view. The other creditors are in the ordinary position of creditors now; but in future they will have their claims postponed in order that the tenant may go on in a hopeless condition. I have spoken strongly of these clauses, but I hope not in an unfair spirit. They will not work to the advantage either of the tenant or the landlord. My noble Friend said that by the Land Act of 1881 the landlords were discouraged from effecting improvements on their property. I have no word but of commendation for those landlords who have done their duty in this respect. But in the large mass of cases improvements have been executed by the tenants, and, as is clearly shown by the Blue Book, the landlords have not done much to improve the land of the country. I will not go into the other provisions of the Bill, which have already been dealt with by several of your Lordships, but only desire to deny that any noble Lord on this side of the House approaches the question in any factious spirit. We are too well aware of the difficulties which surround the question of Irish land, not to desire to see some of them removed before we are called upon again to resume the responsibilities of Office.

The Earl of SELBORNE: My Lords, I think my noble Friend the noble Duke was well justified in saying, at the outset of his eloquent speech, that he could not examine this Bill without some regard to the general situation in which we find ourselves with respect to Ireland. It is perfectly manifest that the three measures, two of which are now before Parliament, and the other is in prospect, are so related to each other that it is wholly impossible satisfactorily to separate any one of them from the rest. One of these two measures, now pending in "another place," is for the repression of crime in Ireland, miscalled Coercion, but really a measure for the protection of liberty. The present measure, and the other and larger measure, bearing on the same subject, which I understand to be in prospect, refer to the Land Laws; and the present Bill I cannot but regard, with reference to the other and larger measure, as, to some extent, provisional in its character. But one thing, in my judgment, is absolutely certain—that without the repression of crime in Ireland you will not produce any good from any measure which you may devise. This present Bill being founded on the Report of what is commonly called the Cowper Commission, I have the authority of that Report for what I say. In paragraph 77 of that Report are these words—

> "While recommending certain changes in the law which circumstances have rendered necessary for the present relief of the tenant, it is right that we should press, in the interests of all classes, the maintenance of law and order, which has in several parts of the country been grievously outraged. In the absence of that security which ought to be enjoyed in every civilized community, capital is discouraged, and enterprize and industry are checked; and it is impossible that any country can thrive, or any healing measure be devised, which can add much to its prosperity."

I think the noble Duke had too much authority for some of his observations bearing upon the general political situation. Is it, or is it not, part of that political situation that the measure which the Government has introduced —I speak of its general tenour and principle, and not of particular clauses

— that this measure for the protection of liberty and for the repression of crime and conspiracy is being opposed strenuously, and with extreme energy, all over the country by those who were lately responsible for the government of this country? When the noble Earl (the Earl of Kimberley) speaks of freedom from political passion and feeling in this matter, I would ask him whether there is, or is not, at the present moment an alliance offensive and defensive between those who lately had the government in their hands, and the same men who were not so very long ago described as marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire? And are they not marching through rapine to the disintegration of the Empire as much now as then? These men have not relaxed one iota in their efforts or their object, and the rapine is as great as it ever was. What does this same Report say upon that subject? It says—

> "The operation of the Land Act of 1881 has been affected in many districts by combinations to resist the payment of rent and the right of free sale."

And then—

> "Outrage was at first made use of to intimidate parties who were willing to pay rent, but latterly the methods of passing resolutions at National League meetings, causing their proceedings to be reported in the local newspapers, naming obnoxious men, and then Boycotting those men, has been adopted."

Then the paragraph goes on to describe the horrible process, the terrible oppression, in terms which your Lordships have doubtless read; and in the appendix is printed the Plan of Campaign as it issued from the office of the National League. That is the situation with which you have to deal. A new morality, not merely a new policy, has been started by those who were lately responsible for the government of the country, and people are going all over the country, and the late Prime Minister is calling spirits from the vasty deep—it does not seem to matter what sort of spirits they are—I may speak of them in the words formerly quoted by Burke—

> "Black spirits and white,
> Red spirits and grey,
> Mingle, mingle, mingle,
> You that mingle may."

It was only yesterday that I read a letter from Mr. Gladstone—one of those letters which are scattered like snowflakes over the United Kingdom and the United States—declaring, that in order to defeat this Bill, which has been produced to put down crime and conspiracy against law, and to enable the Government to be carried on in Ireland, he is ready to risk all or any political consequences. What is meant by that? By way of appeal against an immense majority of the House of Commons, recently returned, something out-of-doors is to produce some political consequences for the purpose of overawing and intimidating the Legislature, and preventing them from passing measures for the restoration of order and the prevention of crime. That does seem to be a state of things relevant to this occasion and necessary to be borne in mind. It is the duty of every one of your Lordships to take care that those who have the courage to endeavour to govern Ireland shall receive the support which they ought to receive from the law-abiding and law-loving Members of the British Legislature. My Lords, I am very sorry to have been obliged to say this, because I know the private virtues of many of those who, in a manner which is to me perfectly inscrutable, have been brought into this situation. I should be very sorry to think unfavourably of them. That great reputations should be in danger of wreck, even by suicide, is to me a matter of profound regret and sorrow. My Lords, I pass to some other topics that have been mentioned. The noble Earl who has just addressed your Lordships, in dealing with that part of the speech of the noble Duke which related to the defunct land scheme of the late Government, referred to a letter published by me—I thought it my duty to do it—last year when that scheme was before Parliament. I then referred to a letter written in December, 1885, which was seen by some of those who had been my Colleagues. I said that to desert the loyal subjects of the Crown in Ireland and to hand them over to their avowed and bitter enemies, would, in my judgment, be the lowest depth of dishonour. I thought so then, and I continue to think so still, and with regard to the scheme of buying out the Irish landlords. I looked upon it as impracticable, because it could not be done on Irish credit and certainly would not be done on English. And my published letter was not written until it had become apparent, from the manner in which that part of the scheme of the late Government was suddenly altered; and from Mr. Gladstone's language in explaining it, that there was no settled purpose in it, and that what afterwards happened, when it was given up, was practically sure to happen. Then, with regard to the Land Act of 1881—of course, if I had foreseen in 1881 that within six years those who introduced that measure would throw it over, and propose to abandon the whole government of Ireland to those who thwarted it from the beginning—if I had foreseen that I cannot tell what I should have said and done. I could not have spoken to your Lordships as I did. I could not have presented it to your Lordships as a measure which would operate for the benefit of the landlords as well as the tenants. I thought so then, and I am confirmed rather than otherwise by what has since taken place. After it passed, the outcry was from landlords that the rents were being unfairly and unduly reduced. The speeches in this debate seem to show that the complaint now comes from the other side, and that the judicial rents are said to be too high. Such expressions of dissatisfaction with the rents fixed on part of both landlords and tenants, appear to me to indicate that justice was, on the whole, done between them. In all large operations you cannot have absolute uniformity. The real reason why the Land Act of 1881 has failed is that, immediately the Act was passed, the present allies of the late Government set themselves steadily to defeat its object by all the machinery at their command, and by all the means in their power. The present Government were, in my judgment, bound to consider three great interests. They were bound to consider the interest of the great body of the tenants, whom I place first because they are the most numerous. An Irish tenant whose judicial rent is more than could now be paid is entitled to at least as much consideration as an English tenant in similar circumstances. A good landlord in this country if he found his tenant really unable to pay the rent he had agreed to pay, and that he was unable to make a reasonable profit out of the land; and if he could not by determining the tenancy let the land on similar or better terms to anyone else, and also could not make any profit by taking it into his own hands, would take all the circumstances of the case into consideration. Therefore it appears to me that if we are to legislate at all to relieve the situation in Ireland in cases where the tenants find it impossible to pay their rents, we are bound to act upon those principles which in similar cases in this country a good, reasonable, and patriotic landlord would apply to his tenants. I think, on the other hand, that the Government would be taking an erroneous course if they did not recognize the landlord's general right to his rent which has been fixed under the Land Act when it is not impossible for the tenant to pay it. I cannot admit that, in the case of a tenancy of land, any more than in any other bargain, relief ought to be given to a man who can pay, merely because the bargain has not turned out profitable to him. But there is also, as I have said, an interest of the nation—of the State. I have no hesitation in repeating what I said in 1881, that in the circumstances of Ireland the laws of property and the right of the landlord must bend to the necessities of the case, when it is necessary that some of their incidents should be modified, in order to prevent great public evils and dangers. To permit unlimited evictions to go on unchecked in that country under all conceivable circumstances, however harsh, would be to give every possible handle to the evil-disposed to inflame the minds of the Irish people against the law, and would be infatuation on the part of Her Majesty's Government. It is the duty of the Government to consider by what means those evictions which are not the consequence of political or other combinations to defeat the landlords' rights, and which are admitted to be harsh and unreasonable, if not illegal, can be checked. It is the interest of the State, and, therefore, it is the right of the State, to place some limit upon evictions of that sort. It appears to me that the provisions of the present Bill are founded upon the principles which I have just laid down. In considering the general scope of the measure I shall not go through it clause by clause. I may divide the criticisms which have been passed upon the Bill under three heads. First, those which have proceeded from the Front Bench on this side of the House. I cannot conceal from myself that the view taken of the measure on that Front Bench is not likely to be entirely unconnected with some other matters which are quite distinct and independent of its particular provisions. As I have already said, even I myself cannot help connecting this measure with other matters which are proceeding "elsewhere;" and, therefore, when I hear from the noble Lords around me criticisms upon the Bill, some of which, upon their face, may sound reasonable enough—I do not say that they are not to be attended to and carefully weighed—but I own that those criticisms appear to me to come from persons who would not be very sorry if Her Majesty's Government were placed in a position of embarrassment with regard to this measure as well as with regard to some other matters. That fact, I confess, operates on my mind as a drawback from the value of those criticisms. With regard to the criticisms which have been offered to the Bill on the part of the next class, the Irish landlords, I must ask pardon from those who have put them forward if I say that criticisms which come from that side in Dublin in relation to such measures are very apt to be over-strained and exaggerated. I had occasion, in 1881, to say that the criticisms on the Land Bill of that year on the part of the landlords were so highly coloured that they did not commend themselves very much to my mind, and I am obliged to take the same view of some of the landlords' criticisms of the present Bill. But then comes my noble and learned Friend (Lord Fitzgerald), whom I put in a class by himself. With regard to the observations made upon the measure by that noble and learned Lord, whether they are right or wrong, we must all admit that he is a very competent judge of the matter on which he has spoken, and that he has brought to the consideration of the subject a most just and candid mind. From my personal knowledge of the noble and learned Lord, I must say that no authority can well stand higher in connection with any such subject than his. I cannot pretend to be as good a judge as he is of the probable practical working of the bankruptcy clauses of this measure; but I think that I should have been prepared, on principle, to have justified the bankruptcy provisions of the Bill. The principle on which those provisions are founded is that where bankruptcy has been caused otherwise than by the fault of the bankrupt, the Court may allow him to remain in possession; fixing a fair rent, subject to the control of the Court, until such composition of his debts as may be reasonable shall be paid, unless his conduct should make it right to displace him. The landland will have secured to him the payment throughout of the rent which the Court thinks fair; and it is—I presume—intended, that when the bankruptcy is worked off, the tenant shall remain in possession at that rent. I confess I should not have thought—apart from the influence of unlawful combinations, as to which the Judge could hardly be misled—that there would be any very formidable difficulty in giving effect to these provisions. The objections to the scheme of the Commission have been stated with far more force and cogency than I could employ. Those which seem to me to be fatal to it are as follows:— First of all, that you have a solemn Parliamentary bargain between the whole of the tenant and the whole of the landlord interest in Ireland, made six years ago, for better or worse, for a certain term of years. To throw that over because in some cases, not generally, the rent may appear to be too high, would be to produce general insecurity and confusion for the sake of particular cases which may, I think, be dealt with otherwise. And the other reason, at least as forcible in my judgment, is this — that your quinquennial settlement would be open to the same sort of attack. The term is shorter, but it is a term within which prices may vary; and the next thing might be to say that nothing will do but to settle the rent every year. It seems to me that those are very serious and solid objections to the proposals of the Commission; and, there are others with which I will not now trouble the House. I cannot help preferring, subject to such Amendments as it may be susceptible of, the plan of the Government. With regard to the objection about the enormous block of these cases, it appears to me to be a question whether it might not be better, in order to relieve that difficulty, to limit the cases in which bankruptcy might take effect to those in which a judgment of ejectment has been actually obtained, not including the more numerous cases in which proceedings are simply pending. This Bill, however, if it were the best which the united wisdom of all your Lordships could devise, would be mere waste paper, you might tear it up at once, if you have not such a Crimes Act as will enable you to deal with crime and with conspiracy against law and order. And, therefore, my Lords, if I were to express my opinion of the duty of the Government, it would be this—to consider the details of this Bill as reasonable men, to meet difficulties as far as they can; and if a clause as to which we are told that all the landlords and all the tenants disapprove it, is really found to be attended with such great practical difficulties as to prevent its working, and to be incapable of being obviated by amendment — why then, if nobody likes it, that certainly is not a matter on which the Government should need stand or fall. The Government will, of course, exercise their discretion as to what are the principles of this, or any other measure, by which they ought to stand or fall; but, in my humble judgment, they occupy at this moment a place of such serious responsibility, that it should be no light matter indeed which could induce them, even if they do not carry their measures exactly in the form which they prefer, to relinquish the post which they now hold.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, I should, in ordinary circumstances, not wish to follow the noble and learned Earl (the Earl of Selborne); but it is impossible to remain silent, considering the language he has used with reference to myself and the Colleagues who sit near me. I can assure the noble and learned Earl that I heard his language with great pain—pain, not because I felt that I was in the least deserving the censures which he showered upon us, but pain because the respect which I entertain for the noble and learned Earl must always make it painful to find him indulging in such language of vituperation. I doubt very much whether the discussion of this measure will be improved in tone and spirit and usefulness by some of the speeches we have listened to. They have dealt with much that was outside the measure altogether. I feel it is to be regretted that we cannot find ourselves differing on political matters, however grave the differences may be, without seeking to tinge the action and conduct of one another in the way in which my noble and learned Friend has done. We may be as utterly wrong as he thinks us; but at least one would have thought that one who for years has been living in a judicial atmosphere, would have listened to see what might have been said, and have remembered how it might be possible to have an honest and true desire to do what was good while differing in the view which we take. It has been charged against us that we have adopted a new morality. I deny it altogether, absolutely, unequivocally. I cannot trust myself to use the words that seem to me to be necessary to deny an imputation of that sort. I hold the same views which I have held all my life. Does the noble and learned Earl mean that we have approved, or do approve, all that has been done by those with whom he says we are in political association? All I can say is that if the noble and learned Earl intends to make such a suggestion, it would be better to make it more definitely and directly, and on an occasion when it can be directly met. The noble and learned Earl referred to the Bill which is at present in "another place;" but that is a question which could only be discussed at considerable length, and with an amount of detail which would be perfectly unsuitable on the present occasion. But one word I must be permitted to say. I trust the noble and learned Earl will cease to believe that I have the slightest sympathy or the slightest tinge of approval of any breach or defiance of the law or for crime or outrage in Ireland, or in any other part of the United Kingdom.

The Earl of SELBORNE: I never meant to accuse the noble and learned Lord of sympathy with crime. What I said was that a shield had been thrown over those who were responsible for it.

Lord HERSCHELL: I entirely deny that I have been a party to doing anything to throw a shield over those who are responsible for crime. Such a statement may to some extent damage the Members of the late Government; but may not that damage be too dearly bought? If such an accusation is believed—I very much doubt it—and if it were thought that leading men in this country, supported as they are by millions of their fellow-countrymen, have sympathy with crime, it would not be likely to make the task of governing Ireland very much easier. I have never said, and I will never say, one word that will make that task more difficult than it would otherwise be. I am not going into a defence of our action; but I would like to say this—that it is perfectly consistent to say that we do not sympathize with crime, and that we may, nevertheless, believe that the state of crime and outrage is such that a particular measure for its repression may do more harm than good. By such a measure you undoubtedly create a great and serious danger. An opiate may not always be the best remedy; it may give quiet for the moment, but it may make the disease more difficult to deal with. I am not going to say that it is so in the present case; but I am prepared to defend the view which I take as to this measure, and I maintain that it is a view which, at all events, may be perfectly honestly held and acted upon by anyone in my position. I have said in public more than once that I doubted whether much good is to be done by that kind of denunciation which the noble and learned Earl thinks we ought to employ on every occasion with regard to the action of those to whom he has referred. In my opinion, violence of denunciation will in such cases do more harm than good. It merely leads to exasperation, and I doubt whether it ever does any good. You must try to see things as they see them, and try to understand their point of view, and then do your best to point out the evils that may result. I have always endeavoured to do that, and I shall endeavour to do it still; and I believe that that kind of reasoning is far more likely to produce a good effect than any violence of language or denunciation. Now, I wish to say something with regard to the question of land legislation. I am not going to enter into a defence of the Land Act of 1881, although my noble Friend opposite will remember that I took a somewhat active part in piloting that measure in "another place." But I have seen no evidence to show me that that Act was not an absolute necessity. It has been said that it is a failure. But what was the state of things in Ireland at that time? What does the noble Duke think would have been the state of things if that Act had not been passed? A measure is not necessarily a failure if it has not produced all the results which were expected from it, or if evil results happen which were not expected. But does anyone suppose that we should have been in a better position if that Act had not been passed? If Ireland is to be governed by legislation from a united Parliament, is it possible to conceive that we can go on legislating in utter disregard of the enormous majority of the Representatives of Ireland, in that case of all shades of political opinion? Would it have been safe or reasonable for any Government of this country to disregard such an opinion, and to refuse any legislation which was thought necessary by such a vast majority of all classes of political opinion? If we are to continue to govern Ireland by laws passed here, it is essential as far as possible to consult Irish opinions. The evidence given before the Land Commission has satisfied me that the Act of 1881 has been a great benefit to Ireland. If you compare the reductions made by the Land Commission with the reductions made by landlords in England and in Scotland it will be seen that as far as judicial reduction of rents is concerned, its effect has been to do nothing more in Ireland than good landlords have voluntarily done and are doing in England and Scotland. I do not think that that is necessarily a condemnation of Irish landlords; I quite admit the difficulties in the way, and I admit that it may have been more difficult for them to come to the kind of arrangement which has been come to elsewhere. Everything that has been brought out convinces me that that Act was necessary, and that its operation was just. Now I pass to the present measure. My criticisms I know are discounted in advance by my noble and learned Friend. He says that noble Lords on this Bench criticize the measure as a matter of course in connection with what we have heard outside, and in connection with another measure. If what we have heard outside is well-founded, there are noble Lords in immediate political sympathy with the noble and learned Lord who have boasted of the hand they have had in the legislation of the Government, and have pointed out that if the Government are passing repressive measures they have forced it at the same time to introduce remedial measures, and have claimed the authorship of the most important of the clauses of this measure, of course by way of suggestion only. What is the mischief that has to be met? The Commissioners who have fully investigated the condition of affairs in Ireland have reported that, owing to the unexpected fall in prices which has taken place, the judicial rents—though fair when fixed—have now become unreasonable, and in many cases impossible. That is the mischief that has to be met. The Report clearly establishes that though allowance may have been made by the Sub-Commissioners in fixing a fair rent for the probability of good and bad seasons, yet that there was not taken into consideration a serious fall of prices, for such fall was not anticipated. Now this Bill proposes to do nothing for any of the tenants of Ireland unless they are leaseholders or become bankrupt. Leaseholders are to be allowed to apply to have a fair rent fixed, and of course the rent that would now be fixed would be very much lower than the rent fixed three or four years ago. The tenants whose rents have been fixed some time ago are, unless they become bankrupt, to go on paying the rent which is unreasonable and excessive and much higher than the rent which will be fixed to be paid by the leaseholders. This will give the leaseholders a great advantage over the ordinary tenants of Ireland, and yet in 1881 it was admitted that the ordinary tenants had a far better claim to relief than the leaseholders. At present there are only certain parts of Ireland that are disturbed; but such legislation as this would cause dissatisfaction and disorder all over Ireland, and in some districts that are now the quietest. These bankruptcy provisions are calculated to produce the maximum of disadvantage to the landlord, and the minimum of advantage to the tenant. The noble and learned Lord (Lord Fitzgerald) pointed out that they would be unworkable. The Bankruptcy Act of 1883 gave County Court Judges jurisdiction in bankruptcy up to a small amount. Long before this measure was introduced I received a communication from a very able County Court Judge, who had had great experience in regard to this part of the Act, and it was his testimony that the difficulty of arriving at the facts, so as to decide what composition a bankrupt could pay, was so great that this part of the Act had completely broken down. It would be the same with the bankrupt provisions of this Bill. If you put the case of fair rent, what is your guide unless you have regard to what the land produces and the tenant can pay? But according to your Bill the County Court Judge is to consider at large what rent he will choose to fix as the reduced rent which the tenant can pay. The scheme is not fair to the other creditors of the tenant, because if they get a judgment they cannot get it executed, and can only look to what they can get from the Official Assignee, and the whole of the tenant's assets may go as reduced rent to the landlord. Both in the interest of tenant and landlord it seems to me a disastrous proposal. It is said that rent was solemnly fixed judicially some years ago, and how can we justify any interference with a Parliamentary contract? I cannot understand that argument in the light of this Bill, which breaks two conditions of the statutory tenancy. The Parliamentary contract fixed the rent which ought to be paid; but it fixed also the date on which it was to be paid, as well as the amount. There is no use in fixing the rent if you also provide that it need not be paid. Then there was another condition—that the statutory contract was broken if anything was done which would vest the tenancy in the assignee in bankruptcy. But this is your scheme. Can there be any greater violation of the Parliamentary contract than interfering with the time of payment, and vesting the tenant's estate in the bankruptcy assignee? If this bankruptcy scheme be not satisfactory some other method must be found. It will never do to leave the matter where it is. The noble and learned Earl said that it was essential to the success of any remedial legislation to pass a measure for the repression of crime. But it appears to me that the question is whether we have not done harm by continually mixing up our remedial legislation with measures dealing with crime, and thereby putting the people into a state of exasperation. If you are going to introduce remedial legislation you would do much better to introduce that remedial legislation first, and try whether it will not render stronger measures unnecessary. I quite appreciate the view that remedial legislation must have fair play. But this argument is weakened when you remember the state of mind which has always been engendered by repressive legislation. But whatever view may be maintained, the Government will see that it is absolutely essential to make the remedial legislation as thorough as possible. I do not believe there is any difference in our desire to do what is best with reference to Ireland. I can understand the anger of those who think the course wrong pursued by those of us who sit on this Bench. I believe them to be as sincere as we are ourselves; but at least in a measure such as this, which need not introduce any Party question, we may co-operate together to the same end of making this a measure as satisfactory as possible.

Lord INCHIQUIN said, he could not congratulate the Government upon the introduction of this Bill. The position of the Irish landlord under it would not be a happy one. He was placed between "the devil and the deep sea," or in other words, between the Land League and political necessity. It had been well said that Irish landlords were like men living in a country subject to earthquakes, where, periodically, an earthquake was sure to come and destroy part of their property. It had been said that this Bill was the counterpart of the Crimes Bill. But he thought it unwise that both Bills should be passing through Parliament at the same time. It would have been better to have allowed the Crimes Act to produce the desired effect before introducing any measure like the present. He thought it would be wiser to introduce at once the Purchase Bill which had been foreshadowed. In that case the Purchase Clauses would very probably have been put in operation without delay, and all the annoying proceedings which were likely to take place under this Bill would have been avoided, because the tenants and landlords would have had a direct inducement to come to a final arrangement, and the confusion and litigation which must inevitably be caused by the present proposals of the Government would be avoided. He was strongly opposed to the present system of dual ownership. Before the Land Act of 1881 there was never any difficulty in selling land in Ireland or in mortgaging it. Now sales were impossible, except under Lord Ashbourne's Act; no one would lend money on land or invest capital in the country. The dual ownership created by the Act of 1881 had, in fact, destroyed every advantage formerly attaching to land tenure, and until it was got rid of in some way or other it would be impossible to have prosperity in Ireland. There were two ways of getting out of it; one was the purchase of the landlord's interest by the tenant, and the other the purchase of the tenant's interest by the landlord. He contended that if the landlords were bought out they would be doing as great an injury to Ireland as it was possible to conceive. Landlordism he believed to be absolutely necessary. If the landlords were bought out the tenants would in time get into the hands of the "gombeen" men, who would become the landlords of the future. By passing the bankruptcy and equitable jurisdiction clauses the Legislature would break the promises made to the landlords in 1881. It was then understood that, a fair rent having been fixed, a tenant would only be permitted to retain possession of the land as long as he should fulfil the conditions of his judicial lease. Now, however, it was proposed to allow the tenant to break his judicial lease and to withhold the rent agreed upon, and yet to retain the land for an indefinite period, to be fixed by a County Court Judge. The Bill, in fact, would put a tenant into a better position than he would be in if he had purchased the property; for if he had purchased the land it would be sold, were he made a bankrupt for the benefit of his creditors. But because it was his landlord's property he was to be allowed to retain it for the purpose of paying his other debts. He thought that so iniquitous a provision that he, for one, could not think of voting for anything of the kind. Those who were accustomed to deal with these matters in Ireland should be allowed to say a word as to the possible effect of these Bankruptcy Clauses. The National League would advise tenants not to pay their rents, in order to go to the Bankruptcy Court. The tenant could not be ejected until a year's rent was due. When that time arrived and the landlord proceeded against him the tenant would make a counter move, and apply under the Bankruptcy Clauses; that would probably extend the time for another three months, and if during the next six months the landlord were fortunate enough to get his case heard he might get a portion of his rent. That meant he would have to be out of his rent for at least 18 months. The enormous costs which would be put upon the landlord by those proceedings would of themselves absolutely swamp him, to say nothing of the time which would be consumed. The Irish landlords begged their Lordships not to pass a Bill which, although it might appear to Englishmen and lawyers to work well in theory, would not, in the opinion of those most intimately acquainted with the circumstances of that country, work in Ireland. If their Lordships passed the Bill in its present shape all he could say was this—and he was backed up in his opinion by a large number of people in Ireland who were accustomed to deal with land—that it would absolutely ruin all those who had encumbered estates. With regard to Clause 4, which provided for a notice in lieu of ejectment, it ought to be made clear that the landlord would be able to take possession by the notice which he was called upon to serve. Immediately that notice was served the landlord ought to be able to deal with the land as his own, and that should be made clear. In one case in which his Lordship had himself ejected a tenant for three-and-a-half years' rent the man was re-admitted a caretaker. He owed £350, and his Lordship at once took possession of all the property on the land, with the result that on accounting at the end of six months to his tenant, the latter had only to pay £40 to be re-admitted a tenant as a free man. With regard to the remission of rates, some objection had been taken to that provision; but, for his own part, he could not see any objection to it. It seemed to him perfectly reasonable that if a landlord was unable to make use of his land, he should not be charged with the rates upon it. As to the objection that those rates would be thrown upon the other ratepayers, he thought it an advantage that they should have an interest in preventing farms from becoming derelict. He thought that unfair ejectments could best be dealt with by an enlargement of Clause 21; but limits should be placed upon the powers of the County Court Judges in dealing with those cases, and a certain proportion of the rent should be paid down. He thought a very small alteration of the clause would be sufficient. Landlords, he thought, as a rule dealt as leniently with their tenants as the County Court Judges were likely to feel themselves justified in doing. He sincerely hoped that whatever Bill was agreed to by their Lordships would at least have the effect that, together with the Crimes Bill, which was now certain soon to become law, it would spread a new light and prosperity over Ireland from one end to the other. It was his firm conviction that if the Crimes Bill was properly and judiciously worked it would have the effect of inducing tenants to return to their old ways, and they would see that honesty was the best policy.

THE EARL OF HOWTH said, that as a Liberal Unionist connected with Ireland he felt that the Members of that Party owed a great debt of gratitude to the Conservative Government during the past year for having preserved the United Kingdom from a great danger, and, therefore, without any departure from their principles, it was both their interest and their duty to do their best to support Her Majesty's Government in their endeavours to pass this Bill. He hoped, however, the Amendments which had been alluded to would receive the full consideration of the Government. It was equally the interest and the duty of Her Majesty's Government to bring forward this measure, which was intended to relieve the tenants, whether leaseholders or not, from having to pay unfair rents, and to stop evictions. The leaseholders of Ireland were about 150,000 in number, and their annual rentals amounted in the aggregate to something like £4,000,000. The leasehold landlords would have to incur the fortune of war and to have their rents reduced, but scarcely, he thought, to the extent of 40 per cent, which was the amount of reduction which had been demanded by some persons who put themselves forward as representing the interests of the tenants. He trusted that the future status and condition of the leasehold landlords of Ireland would be fixed so that they might be placed upon an equality with the other class of landlords, whose rents had been judicially fixed. He thought that the leasehold landlords of Ireland, who had for generations given their tenants what was practically fixity of tenure, were entitled to some consideration at the hands of Parliament when the terms of their leases were broken by legislation.

THE DUKE OF ABERCORN said, that he was glad that the ability with which the Lord Privy Seal had introduced this measure about a month ago had been recognized by his having been made a Cabinet Minister. He agreed with the general principles of the measure, although its details would inevitably be subjected to severe criticism. He believed that Her Majesty's Government had introduced this Measure with the best intentions of ameliorating, as far as possible, the condition of the tenants of Ireland, and especially those poor tenants who held under £4. At the same time, he hoped the Government would not go too far in the direction of impoverishing the landlord class in that country, whose property had been sliced away by various legislative Acts during the past few years. Never in the history of Ireland had the landlord class been in such a critical position; many of them at the present moment were in poverty, and if the little that was left them was taken away by the provisions of this Bill that poverty would be turned into absolute penury. The Government never had a better opportunity of passing a good Land Bill than at the present time. They were backed up by a large majority in both Houses of Parliament, and their endeavours would be very much helped by the country at large. Of the present Bill the clauses referring to leaseholds and town parks were connected principally with Ulster; the Equitable or Bankruptcy Clauses referred principally to the South and West; and the 21st, the Staying of Eviction Clause, referred nearly to the whole of Ireland. Now, with regard to the leaseholds, he rejoiced as an Ulster man that the large class of tenants who held leases were to come under the provisions of the Bill; it was a very great privilege which was being conferred upon them, and he hoped that they would be grateful for it. He did not agree with the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Herschell) as to the evils or injustice to year-to-year tenants which would arise concurrently, with this benefit to the leaseholders. With regard to the Staying of Eviction Clause, every loyal Irishman would rejoice that under it no harsh or unnecessary eviction would be longer possible. Of the Bankruptcy Clauses, he had noted that only one noble and learned Lord had expressed his approval of them. If that part of the Bill was carried into effect new Courts would have to be constituted, and the expense accruing would be very considerable indeed. A gentleman well acquainted with the working of the Bankruptcy Laws in Ireland had stated to him that the expense probably would be no less than £300,000 per annum. He could assure the Government that the Ulster farmers were sick of agitation which destroyed all commerce and enterprise; the tenants, as a rule, in the South and West were also sick of agitation, and would be only too glad if the action of the National League were to be once for all put a stop to. But to obtain such rest a good Bill was absolutely necessary. In his opinion, the present measure, with some Amendments, might be made a good one. He hoped, therefore, both the Government and the Opposition would unite in endeavouring to make this Bill as perfect and as workable as possible, so as to make it final, and declare that they would allow no more tinkering with the Land Laws of Ireland. If they made that distinctly known to the tenant farmers of Ireland, he believed the amount of good that would be done could hardly be over estimated. But as long as the farmers were so burdened with debt as at present, such legislation would lose much of the good it might otherwise produce. He should like to add that he was commissioned to say that the Presbyterian farmers in the North of Ireland entirely objected to and repudiated the Bankruptcy Clauses of the Bill. In their opinion, they were not workable, and they thought it unfair that those tenants in the South and West who had refused to pay their rents, and had combined to decline to fulfil their lawful obligations, should receive the benefits they were asked to accept under those clauses. At the same time, these Presbyterian farmers fully recognized the difficulty in which the Government were placed, and that it was essentially necessary to free the poorer tenants from the vast debt which hung like a rope round their necks. He would, therefore, suggest that if it was found that the equitable clauses of the Bill were not workable, a retrospective clause might be introduced for the purpose of dealing with the debts and liabilities of the farming class as regarded the shopkeeper and the "gombeen" men, so that the tenants might start perfectly free from all incumbrances as soon as the Bill became law.

The Earl of ERNE said, as this measure dealt with the whole of Ireland, and as many parts of Ireland were free from agitation, the effect of the present legislation would be to create dissatisfaction in the peaceful parts. He feared the gravest results would flow from creating a large body of tenants who had less claim to relief, and giving them better terms than their neighbours who had a better claim. He thought that the magnitude of the boon which the Bill conferred on the Irish tenant by the admission of leaseholders to the benefit of the Land Act had not been sufficiently appreciated or commented upon in that discussion. Roughly speaking, this class represented something like a quarter of the number of holders of agricultural land in Ireland. They will get the benefit of the Act at a time when, owing to the fall in prices, rents were being reduced below the reduction of two or three years ago. For his own part, he had never understood why in 1881, when political economy had been relegated to the planet Saturn, one class of contracts should have been placed on a different footing from another. But he was glad now to see that a Conservative Administration was giving what had been persistently denied by Liberal Governments. With regard to town parks, he regretted the insertion of the provision in the Bill, and he hardly saw that there was any necessity for legislation on this point. He supposed it was because there were in the small towns in Ireland a certain number of *bonâ fide* agricultural tenants, and it was considered necessary to meet their case. He believed, however, that the Sub-Commission had perfect power to deal with all such cases. With reference to the Bankruptcy Clauses, he shared to the full the apprehensions expressed by noble Lords on both sides of the House. They had heard last night from a noble and learned Lord, who spoke with great authority, that these clauses were viewed with disfavour by the tenant farmers in Ireland. He was not surprised that solvent and industrious tenants should view with disfavour legislation that would be accompanied by widespread demoralization. But there were numbers who were neither solvent nor industrious, and they would rush to the Court, causing a greater block than had been the case after the passing of the Land Act. It must be remembered that the bankruptcy of the tenant would be as bad for the landlord as for the tenant. He could not see anything to prevent the tenant from repeating the operation of going into Court year after year, and thus getting rent-free. The County Court Judge would have no guide as to the standard of rent he should fix, and the Irish bankruptcy system was too complicated for the clauses to work with any effect. He was sorry that these clauses had been introduced; he did not want in any way to hamper the Government in the task they were carrying on in Ireland, nor did he under-estimate the gravity of the crisis or the arduous nature of their struggle against anarchy in Ireland. He hoped, however, that they would carefully consider these points in Committee, and see whether they could do anything to meet the objections and dangers which had been pointed out in the course of this debate.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN said, he thought the first part of the policy of the Government ought to be the maintenance of law and order, and in that policy he believed they would not only have the support of both Houses of Parliament, but of the great majority of the nation. With that policy it was also necessary to produce remedial legislation. He admitted that the Land Act of 1881 had introduced a great deal of difficulty into the question. He had voted for that Bill, and he recognized in the fullest manner that that Act had said to the Irish landlords—"You shall receive a diminished rent, certainly; but that rent shall be paid to you, and the law will enforce it." It was admitted, however, that the fall in prices had made tenants unable to pay the rents of 1881 and 1882. The condition of things in Ireland in that respect was exactly the same as in England and Scotland. Any Scotch landlord would tell them that even in the case of 19-year leases it had been found absolutely indispensable for landlords, as a matter of common justice and common sense, to depart from the conditions of their leases and lower the rents named in them. The Irish landlords who had taken part in the debate had spoken in the most liberal tone; a more liberal tone than might reasonably have been expected, considering how closely their interests were involved. He had carefully read the Report of Lord Cowper's Commission, and he agreed with the majority of the Commissioners that it would be desirable to revise the judicial rents after a shorter period than 15 years. As a landlord himself, he would not be content to let land in Scotland for 15 years at a rent which would now be fair, for he believed they were now quite at the lowest abyss of the agricultural depression, and that there was much more chance of an improvement than of a further depreciation. In these circumstances, he certainly should not be prepared to commit himself to an arrangement that was to last for 15 years. If he were an Irish landlord he would consider it a disadvantage to be bound for 15 years by rents now fixed. He knew the arguments that might be raised against the frequent revising of rents; but on the whole he thought there would be no real objection to the revision of rents every five years. He, however, recognized that non-interference with the judicial rents was the essential part of this Bill. The bankruptcy provisions of the Bill had been severely criticized, and it certainly did not appear that the Bill dealt adequately with the case of solvent and honest tenants who desired to pay their rents without resorting to bankruptcy. The Bill proposed to give the Court discretion as to the time in which arrears should be paid, and as to the amount of the instalments; but it did not give any discretion as to the amount of debt which ought to be paid. He thought it was a matter for the House to consider whether in that respect the discretion of the Court should not be made complete. He assured the Government that he would give them his most cordial and earnest support in considering this Bill with the most sincere intention, and also to support them in upholding the law, while at the same time they endeavoured to do justice to the tenants of Ireland.

The Earl of MILLTOWN said, that, as a Member of the Royal Commission to which such constant reference had been made, he desired to make a few observations on this Bill, and in explanation of the fact that he had the misfortune to differ from his Colleagues with regard to certain of their recommendations. He had no interest of a personal nature in this matter, and he joined the Commission at the request of the Prime Minister, with the earnest desire and in the hope that he might be of some use in solving a question which he knew to be a vital one to the welfare of Ireland. He determined to examine carefully into the evidence to endeavour to elicit the truth and to give a true verdict according to the evidence. As to the recommendation that the rents should be quinquennially revised, he could not agree to it for this reason especially — that it was impracticable. There existed no machinery for carrying it out, and, as the Commissioner who was best qualified to express an opinion on the point had stated, it would take some years before such machinery could be provided. The recommendation, therefore, afforded no immediate relief for that which was an urgent state of affairs. Judging from the evidence given before the Commission he came to the conclusion that the tenants themselves viewed with the greatest alarm the prospect of a quinquennial revision. One and all expressed the greatest dislike of a scheme which might result five years hence in the raising of their rents. With regard to the proposed extension to leaseholders of the benefits of the Act of 1881, he agreed that it was impossible to overestimate the magnitude of the boon. The number of leaseholders was about 150,000; but by the kindness and magnanimity of the landlords nearly 50,000 of them had already been allowed to participate in the benefits of the Act. Those, therefore, whom the Bill would affect numbered about 100,000, and they were the very cream of the tenantry of Ireland. Why they had hitherto been left out in the cold he could not say. If it had been the Machiavellian policy of the Liberal Government to leave open a permanent source of discontent in Ireland no better means by which to effect their end could have been found. Certainly, the result of their exclusion had been to create an immense amount of irritation, and the leaseholders of Ireland would be grateful to the present Government for having taken the first opportunity to abolish the inequality of which they complained. To the Equitable and Bankruptcy Clauses of the Bill he could not give an unqualified assent. They conferred upon County Court Judges a discretionary power of a most extraordinary kind. How those Judges were to discover all that they were required to know if these clauses were carried he failed to understand. One could not make bricks without straw, and the wisest Judges could not come to a conclusion without evidence. Even if the County Court Judges were endowed with the wisdom of Solon, and the integrity of Aristides, it would be very difficult for them to perform their duties under this measure. How were they to find out the exact position of a tenant's affairs, and whether it was "through his own fault" that their difficulties had arisen? The only evidence forthcoming would be that of the tenant himself. No books would be produced, for the tenants did not keep any. He greatly feared that the immense temptation which the provisions of the Bill presented would result in a certain amount of demoralization similar to that which occurred under the Arrears Act, which, as the evidence given before the Commission showed, was one of the most demoralizing Acts passed in recent times. He might be permitted to give them an instance of this demoralization. It would be remembered that a tenant, in order to become entitled to the benefits of the Act, had to give evidence as to the value of his tenant-right. On one occasion a tenant, anxious to reap the benefits of the measure, solemnly swore that his tenant-right was worth nothing. His arrears were accordingly wiped out, but a very short time afterwards he sold his tenant-right for £400. The story was told to his parish priest, who was at first very much shocked, but said subsequently—"After all, it was not the poor man's fault; it was the fault of that detestable Government which passes such abominable laws that the poor people are obliged to perjure themselves in order to take advantage of them." The object of the 21st clause of the present Bill he thoroughly approved, for he felt that it was right that landlords should not be permitted to effect harsh evictions and to refuse a tenant's reasonable terms. He doubted, however, whether adequate machinery was provided for giving effect to the purpose of the clause. With respect to the Bankruptcy Clauses, subject to what had been said already about the difficulty of ascertaining the facts, they might be valuable if they enabled the tenantry to get rid of the load of debt which had been contracted in prosperous times, and which they were unable to discharge in consequence of the fall in prices. It had been computed, by one of the witnesses whose evidence appeared in the Appendix to the Report, that nearly half the tenantry were overwhelmed with debt to the shopkeepers, the bankers, and the money-lenders. Thus, if the process of bankruptcy only wiped off the arrears of rent, very little good would be done towards giving the tenant a fresh start in life. The other creditors would then proceed by civil process. The Government, therefore, had better get rid altogether of these Bankruptcy Clauses. He quite agreed with what had been so often said, that a Purchase Bill was the only possible solution of this Land Question. The thing was to give these tenants a fresh start. But if this method of bankruptcy was to be kept dangling before their eyes, they would be utterly demoralized; they would always be looking to the State instead of to their own exertions, and a grievous blow would be struck at credit. The tenants of Ireland had been too long spoon-fed, as it was expressed by one of the witnesses before the Commission. He understood from the Lord Privy Seal that he did not contemplate an interference with the judicial rents. But the proposal to give the County Court Judge the power under the Bankruptcy Clauses of fixing such rent as he thought fit in those cases to which the clauses applied, was the very worst way possible of tampering with the rent, and gave a most unfair advantage to the bankrupt and thriftless as compared with the industrious and solvent tenant. He did not believe that in general the judicial rents were too high, and merely on the ground that there had been one or two bad years, it was not right to interfere with those rents. He believed, though judicial rents were very uneven, they were in the main reasonable. If bad years made it difficult to pay judicial or any rent, the loss might be made up in subsequent good years. There was much force in what the noble and learned Earl the late Lord Chancellor said—that judicial rents must on the whole be fair, because they satisfied neither landlord nor tenant. At the same time he admitted there were cases, especially in the North, where the tenants were unfairly rented on their improvements. However hard it may have been for the tenants in the last year or two to pay their rents, there were signs of improvement, and since the Report the price of store cattle had gone up. There were 282,000 tenants in Ireland whose rents were £4 and under, and it was absurd that these men, who were really only labourers, should go through the solemn farce of a complicated bankruptcy to obtain relief from their arrears. Supposing anything like a general strike against payment of rent in Ireland took place, what would be the position of the landlords? During all the time proceedings were pending they would be unable to receive a single penny of rent, yet all the time they would be obliged to fulfil their own legal obligations and continue to pay all the numerous charges on their property. There was another class of men who had been entirely lost sight of in this matter—the Irish labourer. True it was he was not yet represented in Parliament, but he soon would be when he knew his power. His class depended wholly for their living on the landlords of Ireland, because, as a matter of fact, the Irish small farmer never employed a labourer when he could possibly help it, and he never kept him an hour longer than he could avoid. The only employers of these labourers were the men whom recent legislation had pauperized. Consequently, when the labourers found out that the Irish gentry were no longer able to employ them, they would add a considerable item to Irish discontent. With regard to the Purchase Clauses, he cordially agreed with them so far as they went, and, of course, he did not suppose those clauses were the last words of the Government on the subject. He hoped the Government would see their way to consolidate the Courts which dealt with the sale of land in Ireland. In conclusion, he expressed his earnest hope that the Government might see fit to pay attention to the suggestions he had ventured to make, and to modify some of the proposals of the measure.

Earl COWPER said, the noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) who began the discussion that evening had entered at great length into the question of the Land Act of 1881. He (Earl Cowper) did not feel that it was his province to combat all that had been said by the noble Duke; but he must express his surprise at the peculiar position held by him at the time that Bill was passed. He could not understand how anyone who supported the Land Act of 1870 could have been so bitterly opposed to that of 1881. With one or two exceptions, he distinctly stated that, until very recently, landlords did not make improvements on the land, and when the tenants made them, the rents were immediately raised. He attributed the present condition of Ireland to the fact that the landlord class in Ireland—who, in other respects, were a most admirable race of men—had in many instances been undoubtedly bad landlords. The future hope of the country lay in protecting the tenants in the possession of their improvements. One of the reasons why the Act of 1881 had not worked better was that the Land League set themselves against it, and another reason was the fall in prices. It was difficult to hit upon any plan of fixing rents of which great complaints would not be made. He thought the complaints of the Commissioners under the Land Act of 1881 were exaggerated, and the fact that the landlords complained that the rents were too low, while the tenants complained that they were too high, was *primâ facie* evidence of their being fair and just. He thought that on the whole the work of the Commissioners had been satisfactorily performed, and every case in which it had been alleged that they had acted unfairly or wrongly had been brought before the public. With regard to the proposal of the majority of the Commissioners that there should be a five-yearly revision of rent, the principal objection made to it had been that it would interfere with the finality of the arrangement between the landlord and tenant which was supposed to accompany the Act of 1881. But was not that finality broken by the proposals of the Government, which some landlords regarded as taking another slice from them? He hoped the Government did intend to have remedial legislation for those tenants who were over-rented; but it was impossible to have it without interfering with finality.

It was further objected that a five-yearly revision of rent would require an investigation every five years into the circumstances of every holding. That, however, would not be the case, because a clerk sitting at a table with a list of the prices of agricultural produce before him would be able to fix the amount of rent with precision and speed. He believed that perfectly accurate returns could be obtained in much less than two years, and a sufficient basis for all practical purposes already existed. It had been said that the Land Commissioners had expressed an opinion that it was impossible to convert the judicial into a produce rent. That was not the fact, however, because Mr. Justice O'Hagan and Mr. Commissioner Litton had merely said that, as lawyers, they thought it was not advisable that the proposal should be adopted, and Mr. Litton distinctly stated that it could be done. Then, again, it had been asserted that the tenants themselves did not desire that this change in the character of their rents should be effected. He altogether differed from that statement. Mr. Knipe gave them distinctly to understand that the tenants here presented wished for the change. Moreover, a great deal of evidence had been given before the Commission which showed that the tenants did desire that their rents should vary with the price of produce. It had been brought forward, not in that House, but out of it, as an argument against this proposal that it would interfere with the purchase scheme of the Government. He could not conceive how this could be the case. It must be remembered that the price of a holding must be fixed by a valuation and not by the amount of rent, for 20 years' purchase to a man, when rent was fixed now, would be very different from 20 years' purchase to a man whose rent was fixed in 1884. All the arguments which had been raised against the proposal of the majority of the Commission had been brought forward at its sittings by the noble Lord who differed from him with all his ability and force. As regarded the leaseholders, it was very creditable to those noble Lords who sat on the Benches in front of him, that they now admitted the mistake which they made six years ago in excluding leaseholders from the operation of the Act; and it was equally creditable to the landlords of Ireland that they had not said a single word against the extension of the principle of the Land Act to the leaseholders, who were undoubtedly the cream of the Irish agricultural population; they were the most hard-working and the most deserving of all the Irish farmers, and it was only surprising that they had been so long left out in the cold. He entirely approved of the proposal that the right of redemption should date from decree instead of from the actual eviction, because he was satisfied that its operation would be most beneficial in the disturbed districts of the country. With regard to the Bankruptcy Clauses, on which so much has been said, he had not heard any answer to an objection which struck him the moment he heard of the provision—namely, that it would give no relief at all to the most deserving class of cases—those who, having struggled under great difficulties and shown greater industry than their neighbours, and a greater desire to discharge their legal obligations, had been able to pay their rent. There were so few people had stood up for the Bankruptcy Clauses, that he presumed they might consider them as practically thrown overboard; and, if so, there would be very little that was remedial left in the Bill, and something would have to be substituted. The Government had been pressed very much to declare whether they intended to nail their colours to the mast and make the Bill a question of confidence. He sincerely hoped they would not do so. He confessed he was sorry he could not give a more cordial support to the measure of the Government. He came down perfectly prepared to support anything they recommended to the country, because he was as desirous as any noble Lord opposite that the present Government should remain in Office. There was no doubt the Liberals had come to a place where two roads parted; and, as far as he could see, the prospect of their coming together again was far distant. He, therefore, should be most sincerely grieved at doing anything which could in any degree weaken the present Government. If they came to a Division, he should most certainly go in support of the Bill, not only because there were many parts of it of which he approved, but also because he was anxious, on general grounds, to give the Government every support in his power.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, the noble Earl made an excuse for taking up the time of the House when your Lordships are anxious to hear other Peers speak. I wish to say that such an apology from him is absolutely unnecessary. There is nobody who has a greater claim to address your Lordships upon this subject, and I must say that the admirably condensed and cogently reasoned speech he has just delivered thoroughly justifies that claim. I am well aware that there is an anxiety to hear the announcements and explanations of the noble Marquess in the somewhat peculiar position in which the Bill finds itself; and, therefore, I will be as short as possible in the observations that I propose to make. This Bill is divided into four parts. With regard to three of those parts, there are clauses to which no allusion has been made, and there are others which have been highly approved. As to the admission of the leaseholders to the advantages of the Act of 1881, I think, with the exception of the noble Baron who moved the Amendment, and the noble Duke, there has been no one to express an opinion against that part of the measure. Some criticism has, indeed, been levelled against it in its present form, but the noble and learned Lord the Lord Chancellor of Ireland (Lord Ashbourne) has said that it is not the intention of the Government to put the leaseholders in the same position as the annual tenants, and I have no doubt that the Government will take care that an amendment is made in that respect. Another difficulty has been pointed out by my noble and learned Friend the late Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell) with regard to the position in which you are about to place the leaseholders as compared with the annual tenants. They are almost certain to get larger reductions of rent than the annual tenants have already received. That is a point which ought to be carefully considered, though it ought not to be at the expense of the leaseholder. There is another clause, with regard to which I will not say much, having reference to the rating of the landowner, and the disadvantage of the exemption of one will be to the neighbouring ratepayers; and I observe that no answer whatever has been made to the charge that it will give an incidental advantage to a bad landlord over a good one. Now I feel some hesitation in coming to the great battlehorse of this second reading—the Bankruptcy Clauses—more especially as we have been told that the objections of those who do not understand the matter ought not to have much weight. But some of the facts are so clear with regard to these clauses, that a mere layman without much knowledge of local custom can form a clear decision on the matter. A good deal has been said about the County Court Judges and the duties proposed to be put upon them. In the first place, I understand their duty is to ascertain whether the bankruptcy is genuine or not, not always a very easy matter; secondly, whether it has arisen from any cause otherwise than from his own fault; thirdly, whether the bankrupt ought to be put in re-possession of the farm after a time, and whether he would be enabled to work and hold the farm advantageously; fourthly, the County Court Judge is to decide what amount of occupation rent is to be paid; and, fifthly, what shall be the compensation with regard to rent arrears, and also as to the instalments to be paid and the time in which they are to be paid. There are further details with regard to the principles of the management and working of these holdings—some of them contemptibly small in character. Now, as I understand, any tenant of a holding under £50 of rent is entitled to a summary revision of rent with a view to stopping evictions, and is also to be allowed to hold his land for six months. It is quite clear that most of these tenants will avail themselves of these provisions, and to do this he must refuse payment of rent. It is equally clear that in almost all cases the landlords will be obliged to have recourse to evictions. The evil of this is enormous. As has been said, you are actually giving a premium to fraud. You force both landlord and tenant, or, at all events, induce them, to come into a long and very expensive litigation. Then, with that litigation, it is certain that bitterness and irritation will arise. As to the economical results, nothing but evil will come. There is an encouragement to the tenant to do everything that he ought not to do; for instance, to allow deterioration with a view to re-valuation. I believe that the whole of the proposed system is bad.

You have mixed up two questions which ought to be entirely distinct. It is one perfectly distinct question whether you wish to reduce rents which in certain cases may be supposed to be too high, and it is another question whether you should allow some mitigation to an insolvent tenant. With regard to the insolvent, this Bill offers bankruptcy; in all other respects it put the tenant on quite a different footing from what is the usual course, and it puts the landlord in this unfavourable position, that in the case of another debtor, he can cut off all connection with him. In this case the landlord is obliged to go on giving credit to the tenant. I believe that the description which has been given of the Bill is a correct one: that it is an Arrears Bill, without compensation to the landlord. It is a Land Bill, interfering with many most important provisions of the Land Act of 1881, and it is a Bankruptcy Bill which will, in time, involve nearly all the landlords and nearly all the tenants in a perpetual system of bankruptcy, It is a Bill which, as has been said to-night, must end in ruin to both landlord and tenant, and in the demoralization of the tenant. The noble and learned Lord was most courteous and, I have no doubt, perfectly sincere in inviting Amendments from all parts of the House, to which he promised the most careful attention. Many suggestions have been made with regard to the details of this Bill which might, no doubt, be considered and possibly carried out in Committee. But I have great difficulty about the Bankruptcy Clauses. I speak not from my own knowledge, but after consulting the most competent persons; and I am assured that there is a vital defect in the principle underlying these clauses that will render it impossible to remedy them in Committee; and it seems to me that the only course will be to abandon the clauses altogether. The noble Earl referred to a precedent for this course, and cited the fact that the late Government threw over their Land Bill. But the precedent is, I think, scarcely applicable, for we only did so after we had been beaten on the Home Rule Bill. After the evidence taken before the Commission, and the promise implied in the appointment of the Commission, it is impossible for the Government to drop these Bankruptcy Clauses without substituting something in their stead. An old politician once gave me the advice that for a public man it is better never to admit anything. I feel, however, that I must make an admission and an apology to your Lordships. On the occasion of the first reading of this Bill I ended my speech by saying that I was convinced that Her Majesty's Government could pass through this House either this Bill or some other Bill that would be equally pleasing to themselves. I must admit that I was perfectly wrong in the first part of this assertion, and nothing has transpired to show which Bill they would like. The noble Earl the Lord Privy Seal referred to precedents. I have had some experience in this House, and I do not think that I ever remember a Bill dealing with an important subject of the day such as this which has gone through two nights' debate without any defence whatever of one of its principal provisions. I am a little inaccurate, perhaps, when I say that there has been absolutely no defence, for I now remember that a noble Earl (the Earl of Dunraven) who a few weeks ago gave many and excellent reasons for leaving the Government supported the Bill and gallantly defended its provisions. The Lord Privy Seal made a charming little speech, with some neat repartees, but the only defence he made of these clauses of the Bill was to rebut the accusation that they could be termed "bankruptcy" provisions.

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Earl Cadogan): What I said was that certain provisions of the Bill to which reference had been made came under the equitable powers given to County Court Judges and could not be correctly referred to as "bankruptcy" provisions.

Earl GRANVILLE: I am sorry, then, that not one argument was used for these provisions. The noble and learned Lord the Lord Chancellor for Ireland confined his defence of these clauses to stating that they were not open to all the theoretical objections that had been urged. The noble Duke (the Duke of Argyll) has referred to the 30 years that we have been associated politically together. I can go back for 50 years of personal and family ties. I altogether reciprocate his regret at the termination of that association. And I may also say this with regard to the noble and learned Earl (the Earl of Selborne). There is no personal friend for whom I have a greater regard, and I never knew a more loyal and helpful Colleague. I own when I was first subjected to violent personal attacks from two such Friends I felt it much. But I am getting hardened, and feeling no diminution of my regard for them, and believing that there was some reciprocacy of that feeling towards myself, I console myself by believing that they are only actuated by the notion that it would be a want of kindness to spare the rod to the child of their affection. For my own part, I respect their motives and I understand their action, and I hope that these feelings are not absolutely without reciprocity. The greater part of the speech of the noble Duke was a second reading speech against the Land Act of 1881, and the noble and learned Earl also made a second reading speech in favour of the Bill which is now being so warmly debated in the other House. But with regard to the Bill before your Lordships, the noble Duke not only rejected the Bankruptcy Clauses, but made the strongest possible protest against the other main provisions of the measure; and the noble and learned Earl really said nothing that showed that in his opinion this was a Bill which your Lordships ought to adopt. I confess I heard with some astonishment the attack made by the noble Duke upon the noble Earl (Earl Spencer) for having inquired whether the Government are prepared to stand or fall by their remedial measures, and what was the character of the Bill by which they intended to stand. I ventured to say the other day that I thought it most important that before the close of this debate we should have a general statement as to the whole Irish policy of the Government. How are we to arrive at a real understanding of the measures of the Government when, at the present moment, we do not know what the intentions of the Government are as to some of the provisions of this Bill; and are absolutely ignorant of the character of the other remedial measure which is to be introduced? With reference to this other measure, it cannot have been very encouraging to the noble Marquess to hear from the noble and learned Lord that Irish security will not do and that English security cannot be got. I hold that I have a perfect right to ask whether the Government intend to stand or fall by their remedial measures. That is not a factious question. In conclusion, I cannot help pointing out to the Government that if they really treat very differently the two Bills which have been introduced, and are determined, *coûte que coûte*, to pass their measure of repression, while they are willing that the remedial measure should take its chance, I believe it will not put them in a good position before the public opinion of this country.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): So much has been said about the Irish Land Act of 1881 that perhaps I should be open to misconception if I did not, like others, make my confession of faith in respect to it. I am, therefore, bound to say that all the objections to that Act which I have ever entertained I entertain still. I conceive it to be one of the most unfortunate measures ever submitted to the British Parliament, and my objection does not simply arise from the clause for fixing a fair rent. I thought that was a very objectionable proposal; but it was not a new one. It was analogous to the Statute of Labourers, to the Statutes on Usury, and to the law of the maximum and other laws passed by uncivilized communities at various times for fixing the price of commodities between man and man. The practice was barbarous but not unprecedented. A much more serious provision was that which said that where a man had let a bit of his land to another man on the condition that it should be given back at a certain time, that condition should not hold good and the occupant should keep the land for ever. That was a tremendous interference with the rights of property, and in large parts of the country the effect of that interference was very severe. My objection to the Irish Land Act was, and is, that it must inflict a blow upon all confidence in dealing with property which it will require generations to efface. Men never can be certain that in what they are doing, in the contracts and agreements to which they may come, they will not be interfered with by a superior invalidating power. They know that they have no longer to reckon upon pure law or simple right, but that they are relegated to the domain of force. It is electoral force instead of military force; but it is force all the same, and the class that is the weakest cannot be certain that its contracts will be enforced. The noble Earl behind me (the Earl of Kilmorey) complains that I accept the legislation of 1881 as the basis on which we are now to proceed. My Lords, we have no other choice. Continuity of policy, absolutely necessary in foreign affairs, cannot be absolutely dispensed with in home affairs. If every Government were to make it its business to reverse in most vital matters and in connection with critical measures the policy of its Predecessors, confusion and absolute chaos would result. Therefore we are not to blame if we try to work out as far as we can to just and beneficent ends, legislation of which we so much disapprove as we do of the Act of 1881. This doctrine is my defence for assenting to a measure which I like no better than the noble Duke opposite. I do not approve of breaking the contracts of leaseholders in order to bring them within the operation of the fair-rent clause; but I cannot avoid recognizing that you have already broken contracts in the far more essential matter of the restitution of land. I cannot close my eyes to the fact that these leaseholders will form their standard of what is right and just, not from any theories or doctrines or knowledge of law, but from the practice which they see sanctioned by statute with respect to their neighbours; and when they see persons in whom they cannot trace any essential difference of condition from that which they occupy, and when they see their neighbours enjoy advantages which they do not enjoy, it is impossible to say that, though their discontent is illogical, therefore it is unreasonable or unintelligible. Therefore, although I confess I should have great hesitation with reference to this clause if it were generally opposed, yet, as there seems to be a general feeling in favour of it, I think it is the duty of the Government to propose it. But there is one point with regard to the leaseholders on which the noble Lord the Leader of the Opposition assumed a great deal. He said that the leaseholders would get their rents fixed low when they went into Court, and that would lead to discontent on the part of the statutory tenants. But how does the noble Lord know that prices will be low when these leaseholders come in? Prices are rising, and, what is a most essential matter in Ireland, the prices of stock are rising. The noble Earl has fallen into a singular confusion between the English and Irish case. We have had a perfectly phenomenal fall of prices in some of the most essential articles of English produce, and it must take a long period of years before we recover that state of depression. The essence of the English depression is the fall of prices of wheat and barley, which go for very little in the prosperity of Ireland, and although there has been a fall in oats, sheep, cattle, butter, wool, and, I believe, potatoes, it has not been what I may call a phenomenal fall, not anything travelling beyond the ordinary fluctuation of prices which experience of this and past generations ought to prepare us to meet. Therefore, we have no ground for thinking that the low prices in Ireland, so far as they exist, will last, or that the leaseholders who, at the end of this or next year, may go into Court, will meet with exceptionally favourable treatment. But you say that if they do, it is a great injustice, and that you ought on that account at the same time to cut down the rent of their neighbours. But how far are you going? Prices vary, fair rents will vary in the same way. You will always have rents fixed in years of high prices and rents fixed when prices are low, and are you going to be perpetually varying rents in farms where rent has been fixed in order to follow these variations. We have had a very interesting speech from the noble Earl the Chairman of the Commission (Earl Cowper), whose name I cannot mention in this connection without expressing to him our public thanks for the great self-sacrifice and ability which he has shown in the most thankless and difficult labour which he undertook, and although we have in one point differed from my noble Friend, that does not diminish the great sense we have of the ability with which he presided over the Commission. The reasons why we cannot accept this recommendation have already been mentioned in this debate. A five years' term would introduce much and serious litigation. But that is not the only difficulty. The noble Earl and his Colleagues, or the majority of them, recommended that there should be an automatic shifting of rents in accordance with the prices of certain produce every five years. The first answer is—we do not know what the prices are, and there would be great difficulty in ascertaining them in each district. There would be landlord prices and tenant prices. The peculiarity of Ireland is that the whole country is divided into two camps, and there would be great difficulty in obtaining an impartial return of prices. Then, again, what are the products the prices of which are to regulate rents in the several districts? They say that the articles of produce in the different districts which are to regulate rents can be settled by general orders to be made by the Land Commission. Now, it might be that Kerry was an oat county and Clare a hay county; Tipperary might be a potato county. Suppose a man who had grown a crop of potatoes which fetched very little in the market wanted a reduction of rent, it would be poor consolation to him to be told that his county was an oat county, and that the price of oats was unusually high. Until you determine on what produce the rent of a farm is to be fixed you cannot fix rent by a produce scale. You will have to send each farm anew before the Commissioners to have it determined on which particular kind of produce that rent is to be fixed. I confess that that objection was to my mind fatal, and I never saw my way to overcome it. Many noble Lords who have spoken in this debate have assumed that the Commission reported that any distress which may exist, or any difficulty in paying rents, was due exclusively or mainly to the fall in prices. Everybody has spoken of that as if it was the one thing the Commission had noticed, and the late Viceroy of India took very high ground and spoke of it as imposing an imperative duty upon the Government. My Lords, nothing of the kind. The Commission has not determined that the tenants have been ruined by the fall in prices. It is by several causes. Here it is in the 16th clause—

> "The fall in the price of produce of all kinds and in all parts of the country has much impaired the ability of the farmers to pay the full rent. And this following on a previous general restriction of credit by the bank and other lenders of money, as well as by the shopkeepers, has greatly increased their financial difficulties."

Then they go on—

> "The sudden fall in price during the last two years was intensified in its effect by a gradual deterioration which has been going on in the quality and produce of the soil."

And, again—

> "The cost of cultivation compared with that of an earlier period had also greatly increased."

There are thus four causes assigned by the Commission as the reasons why tenants were in a worse position than they formerly were. But if you now interfere with the judicial rent on the ground that prices have fallen, do you imagine that you will be allowed to confine it to this one instance? If you interfere with judicial rents, do you think that you will be allowed to treat this as a special and exceptional occasion? Again and again you will have causes which will reduce the prices of produce. You will have bad seasons, increased cost of cultivation, financial difficulties. Then the tenants will point to this Report and say —"You lowered the rents once, why not lower them again?" What possible answer can you have to the constant appeals which will be raised whenever any cause occurs which diminishes the capacity of the tenant for paying his rent? One of the greatest evils of the Act of 1881 was the value it attached to speculation in Parliamentary concessions. It taught the tenantry of Ireland to look to the possibility of acting through the electoral machinery on Parliament as a relief from difficulty, instead of trusting to their own industry. The oftener you interfere to tear up contracts you have made, and reverse the process through which you have gone, the more you will impress upon the tenantry of Ireland that it is through operating upon the feelings of Parliament that they must look to their well-being. The more often you tear up your own contracts, and set at naught your own promises, the more worthless those contracts and promises will be. My Lords, a belief on the part of men that they will have to perform the promises they make is the very foundation of civilized society. You are laying your axe to the root of that fabric. There is nothing to prevent the tenantry from again acting at a future period for the purpose of again operating on your feelings by the means which they have used in times past. And you may depend upon it that such interference with judicial rents, attractive as it may seem for the moment, will be dearly paid for by the absolute loss of confidence which it will introduce into all transactions between man and man. We have heard a great deal of sympathy expressed for tenants who are able to pay their rents, but who find that they have not made profitable bargains. But are they alone in that experience? Is it not a thing that happens to people every day? A mans buys a business, and the business falls off. Are you to say that the price at which he bought the business is to be paid back to him? You have a terrible experience in late years of the danger of purchasing land in the belief that it will bring in a certain income. Are you prepared to allow all the contracts—all the purchases of land—to be torn up because they have not turned out so profitable as those who entered into them expected? What distinction can you draw between these cases? We have approached the question from a different point of view. As long as people can pay what they undertake to pay, let them do so. But to many men there comes a time when they cannot do it, when the bargain is beyond their strength; and for generations society has recognized this exception to the sacredness of contracts, and has provided relief for insolvent persons, enabling them to escape from the full performance of the contract into which they had entered. It seems to us that this is the precedent to follow where the tenant cannot pay his rent. You do no wrong to the landlord by saying that he shall be excused from the necessity of paying his rent when he is unable to do so. The only question is whether you are able to ascertain with sufficient accuracy whether the rent can be paid or not. My Lords, the objections which I have heard to the Bankruptcy Clauses resolve themselves really into two. I heard the County Court Judges will be incompetent to do their duty; and that the tenants will be so desperately fraudulent that nobody will be able to penetrate through the unscrupulous devices they will set up; and, lastly, there will be such a rush of business that the Courts will be blocked. With regard to the County Court Judges, I believe them to be the best judicial officials in Ireland; and that in case of any mistake we have furnished an appeal to the Judges of Assize. I do not believe that any better judicial machinery can be provided. With respect to the habits of perjury which are said to be inherent in the Irish race, I confess that I heard the statement with astonishment. I believed that the Irish are a rather truthful people. I can only give this assurance, that however high my noble Friends behind me may rate this characteristic, it is not so high as that inherent in certain races lately ruled over by the noble Marquess opposite, and that in spite of this proclivity we have found Englishmen perfectly able to administer very good justice and to see through frauds which have been elaborately drawn up and spread out before them. I do not for a moment believe that this inability to penetrate the case exists, although the noble Lord has laid that down with so much authority. I am inclined to rely on the speech of the noble and learned Lord (the Earl of Selborne), and am content to believe that there is nothing in these Bankruptcy Clauses which is inherently incapable of being carried out. We shall be ready to accept any reasonable Amendments in these Bankruptcy Clauses; all that we shall press is that which we consider ourselves in honour bound to do our best to achieve, and that is to put a stop to harsh and unreasonable evictions. In a word, I will explain why I consider that to be necessary. It is the landlord's right to get his rent as long as his tenant can pay; it is the landlord's right to change the tenant if he can find a tenant who can derive better produce from the farm. As long as he restricts himself within these two rights no one can accuse him of being harsh and unreasonable. But things have gone a good deal further in Ireland than that very simple form of ejectment which we occasionally see in this country. They have got into a wholesale form. There are wholesale combinations of tenants to refuse the payment of rent, and there are wholesale evictions of tenants on particular properties. I do not attempt to state whose fault this is. I merely recognize the state of things as it exists. The result is that in the districts where these operations are going on agriculture is practically paralyzed. Men cannot cultivate their own farms in peace, and landlords cannot either get their rents or let their farms or cultivate their land themselves. It is a state of things in which you must look a little beyond the rights of individual persons. The right of society must be recognized, and the right of the peaceable landowner who has quarrelled with nobody, and who finds that in consequence of the flame that is spreading over the district his agriculture is paralyzed, his right deserves to be recognized as well. Our contention is that this land war must cease. We have offered to the other House of Parliament a measure, certainly not marked by hesitation, in order to put a stop to criminal combinations. But surely we are not unreasonable in saying that when we have asked for exceptional measures in order to put a stop to these combinations that some check should be put upon the action of landlords who exasperate their tenants and keep alive such combinations. I observed that the late Irish Secretary, Mr. John Morley, speaking somewhere in the South of London, compared the people of Ireland to the inhabitants of Bedlam. I should not be prepared to say that, but accepting the comparison from him, if a portion of the population of Ireland are in a position that deserves it, surely when we are doing our best to put on the strait waistcoat we may fairly ask on the other hand that the particular process of unreasonable eviction, by which they are driven to the verge of madness, shall cease. That I must say to my noble Friend behind me is the account of the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government in this matter. We consider these two Bills as sister Bills; they are the complement of each other. The noble and learned Lord has very rightly said that without a measure for the repression of crime, any measure for the improvement of the Land Law would be perfectly futile. That is perfectly true; but there is a reciprocal truth that, without a measure for preventing the new powers now given being used for the purpose of unreasonable eviction, there is no probability in the present state of the opinion of the people of this country of any such measure for the repression of crime being passed. My Lords, I have been pressed to say whether we will consider this a vital question. The noble Marquess who spoke last night put to me a question as to what Amendments we would admit and what Amendments we would consider vital. I hope the noble Lord will not consider me disrespectful if I say that I will give him my opinion on Amendments when I see them, but I am wholly unable to do it before. But in respect to the Bills as a whole, and subject to such Amendments as on consideration we think it right to accept, I say most positively that if they are rejected by a majority of either House of Parliament we shall come to the conclusion that we do not possess the confidence of Parliament. I lay stress on the word "majority" because minorities have exercised considerable powers of late; and when I know what the powers of Obstruction are and what unscrupulous backing they have received, I am not disposed to add more to their sinister force than that which they naturally possess. My Lords, we shall consider with great care, and I assure you with every desire to give effect as far as possible to the various opinions of those favourable to the Bill in the shape of Amendments which are offered to us, but we earnestly beg you on your side not to allow merely imaginary or possible dangers to interfere with the passing of Bills which are, I believe, essential for the primary purpose of restoring law and order in Ireland; and I earnestly hope that you will sustain us in the performance of a task of which all that has gone before, as well as all that exists around us now in the shape of political circumstances and political opposition, makes one of the most arduous tasks that ever statesmen had to deal with.

On Question, "That ('now') stand part of the Motion?"

Resolved in the *affirmative.*

Bill read 2^a accordingly, and *committed* to a Committee of the Whole House on *Thursday* the 12*th of May* next.

House adjourned at a quarter past
Twelve o'clock A.M. to Monday
next, a quarter before
Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 22nd April, 1887.

MINUTES.]—Ways and Means—*considered in Committee—Resolution* [April 21] *reported.*

Private Bill (*by Order*)—*Considered as amended*—West Lancashire Railway.

Public Bills—*Ordered*—Customs and Inland Revenue.*

First Reading—Appellate Jurisdiction.*

Select Committee—Limited Owners (Scotland) * [8], *nominated.*

Committee — Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) * [184]—R.P.

Third Reading—Metropolitan Open Spaces Act Extension * [214], and *passed.*

Provisional Order Bills—*Second Reading*—Pier and Harbour * [222].

Report—Local Government * [216].

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

WEST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY BILL.

(*by Order*).

CONSIDERATION.

Order for Consideration, as amended, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now taken into consideration."—(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to move the rejection of this Bill. In opposing it, my complaint is that the machinery of this House should be made use of for the purpose of imposing upon the public a number of shares and bonds in connection with this Railway Company which must be utterly worthless if this Bill is allowed to pass. Owing to my ignorance of the Forms of the House, I unfortunately allowed the second reading of the Bill to pass unchallenged. I am informed that I ought to have opposed the second reading; but I was not aware of the course which it is usual to take in these matters. The Bill has now passed through Committee; but I may add that it passed as an unopposed Bill, and I am afraid that the Committee before whom it went were not placed in possession of the whole of the facts, so that they might have been able to judge properly of the merits of the Bill. Perhaps the House will allow me to say that this Company was incorporated in 1871, with an authorized capital of £1,166,626. This capital has been entirely expended, and the Company are owing something like £130,000 to their bankers. Their capital now consists of 5 per cent Debenture Stock to the extent of £229,126; 5 per cent Debenture Stock, 1884, £111,912; 5 per cent Debenture Stock, 1884, £250,000; 5 per cent First Preference Shares, £232,000; 5 per cent Second Preference Shares, £300,000; Ordinary Shares, £153,760; and there is a floating debt of £168,000. My opposition to the Bill, as I have already stated, is based upon public grounds. I may explain that, being a preference shareholder myself, I suffer personally from the action I am now taking. What I feel is that this House ought not to be made the machinery for passing a Bill through Parliament by which the public must suffer, and in taking shares in regard to which there is not the most remote possibility of any dividend ever being paid. And what is this railway? It is a line of only 11 miles in length, with running powers over 10 miles. In 1886 the sum due from the Company to their bankers was £124,000, and no dividend has been paid upon any of the Debenture Stock for some time. I have been in communication with the solicitor who is acting for the promoters of the Bill, and in a letter received from him very recently he says—

> "Personally, I only became the adviser of the Company a year ago. I found that they were involved in embarrassments of a serious character, with a floating debt of £168,000. The truth is that the line ought never to have been made at all. The line only extends from Southport to Preston, and there could be no traffic to justify its construction."

This letter was written to me only yesterday by the solicitor who represents the promoters of the Bill. He admits that the railway ought never to have been constructed, and yet the Company now come to this House with a Bill to impose upon the public an additional amount of capital which must result in absolute loss to those who are unwise enough to furnish it. I feel that it is my duty, as a Member of this honourable House, to protect the interests of the public as far as I possibly can; and I do so on this occasion, although the course I am taking is diametrically opposed to my own interests. The second paragraph of the Circular issued by the promoters of the Bill states that the measure has received the unanimous approval of the preference and ordinary shareholders. Now, Sir, that is not the fact. The preference and ordinary shareholders are, in a measure, bogus shareholders. The shares themselves were issued by a man who had to fly from the country for fraud, and they really mean nothing at all. I am one of the unfortunate preference shareholders; but I oppose the Bill because I desire to put a stop, if possible, to an imposition upon the public by the issue of this extra stock. I may say that I received no intimation that the Company intended to submit this Bill to Parliament, although I am a preferential shareholder. Therefore the statement contained in the second paragraph of the Circular of the promoters is absolutely untrue—namely, that the Bill is unanimously approved of by the preference and ordinary shareholders. It has certainly not been approved by me.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe): I rise, Sir, to a point of Order. The hon. Member has stated that he is a preference shareholder in this Company. Therefore he is admittedly interested in the matter from a pecuniary point of view. I want, therefore, to know whether, under the Rules of this House, an hon. Member who has a pecuniary interest in a matter of this kind has a right to use his position as a Member of Parliament to make a Motion for the rejection of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: There can be no doubt that the votes of hon. Members have been frequently disallowed in consequence of their interest in Private Bills; but I am not aware that such disqualification extends so far as to exclude them from taking part in the advocacy of, or opposition to, any particular measure.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I can understand the hon. Member for Hythe (Sir Edward Watkin) interrupting me. Gentlemen who are in the habit of promoting Railway Companies have many curious duties to perform, and they do not like any interference with their own projects.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN: I object to the language of the hon. Member. I am not in the habit of promoting Companies, as the hon. Member very well knows.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: On looking through the Stock Exchange Shares Book I find that the hon. Baronet represents no less than 12 different Companies.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must tell the hon. Member for Stepney that the hon. Baronet was perfectly in Order in calling my attention to a question which might hereafter arise as to the position of the hon. Member in regard to this Bill.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: Then I will not proceed further with the point I was about to bring before the House. I will only say that, in my opinion, the Committee to whom the Bill was referred have given their decision under an entire misapprehension as to the facts of the case and the merits of the measure. The Bill is promoted for the special purpose of raising a large amount of preferential capital, although the Company are paying no dividend at the present moment upon their existing preference stock; while on the other hand they are owing a large amount of money to their bankers. How can it be possible to find the money in future to pay dividends on the preference capital? In the second paragraph of the Preamble of the Bill the promoters say—

> "Whereas a considerable portion of such debenture stock has been issued and applied for the aforesaid purposes, and the Company are in negotiation with their other creditors to satisfy the outstanding debts and liabilities of the Company which exceed £150,000 by the issue of debenture stock to such creditors at a discount, and it is therefore expedient to increase the amount of the said debenture stock and authorize the issue thereof on such terms and conditions, and at such prices as may be sanctioned by the shareholders of the Company at a general meeting."

Then they go on to say that—

> "The Company may from time to time create and issue debenture stock for any sum or sums not exceeding in the whole two hundred thousand pounds and such debenture stock and the holders thereof respectively shall be of the same class or description and subject and entitled to the same powers provisions liabilities rights priorities privileges and incidents whatsoever in all respects as if the debenture stock authorized by this Act had formed part of and an addition to the amount of the West Lancashire Railway (1884) Debenture Stock authorized by The West Lancashire Railway (Capital) Act 1884."

Well, Sir, I say again that my only motive, in objecting to this Bill, is that the public should not be imposed on by the issue of fresh stock, when there is no likelihood whatever that any dividend will be paid on a future occasion. I hope that hon. Members will see the necessity of joining with me in opposing the Bill and in preventing it from becoming law. There is only one other matter which I will mention. The hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Courtney) could not have known that the shares of this Company really represented bogus preference and ordinary shares for which no consideration at all has been received, although they figure in the capital account to a large amount. I am sure that if the hon. Gentleman had been able to take that matter into consideration he would have placed his veto upon the further progress of the Bill.

Mr. PULESTON (Devonport): I am sorry to find myself in opposition to the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down; but I wish to point out that it has always been an established Rule of this House that, unless for some extraordinary reason, the House itself should never interfere with the decision of its Committee after a Bill has passed a second reading, and been relegated to a Committee.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON stated, that the preference and ordinary shares of this Company were bogus shares for which no consideration had been paid, and that that fact was not brought before the Committee.

Mr. PULESTON: I have no interest in this railway either directly or indirectly, nor do I know any Member who has, except the hon. Member who has just told us so. But all the particulars of the Bill which it was necessary to know must have been present in the minds of the Committee, and of the Chairman of Ways and Means in particular, than whom there is no man more careful in sifting out all the facts and circumstances connected with matters of this kind. The Bill now comes before us with the unanimous endorsement of the Committee, and I cannot allow that any sufficient reason has been given by the hon. Member to justify the House in rejecting the Bill at the present stage. The hon. Member has based his objection to the Bill mainly upon his statement, which I cannot assume to be entirely correct that the preference and ordinary shares of this Company are bogus shares.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: Pardon me; what I meant to say was that two-thirds of them were.

Mr. PULESTON: That is certainly not my information. There is, however, no doubt of the fact, and I do not understand the hon. Member to deny it, that every single person connected with this Railway Company, except the hon. Member himself, is in favour of the Bill; and I am given to understand that the Company include some very respectable people, who know very well what they are about in reference to this measure. The principal reason the hon. Member has assigned for moving the rejection of the Bill is that the railway has not paid hitherto, and therefore that it will never pay in future. Now, I think that is the very reason to justify the promoters in bringing forward a Bill of this kind.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: Will the hon. Member pardon me.

Mr. PULESTON: I hope the hon. Member will not interrupt me. The Bill has been introduced in the hope and belief that dividends will be paid when the railway has made further progress, and it will certainly be impossible for it to do that unless it gets this additional capital. If Parliament consents to pass this Bill, it is believed that the line will become a solid and paying concern. It is with that idea that the promoters are seeking to obtain these fresh powers. The rejection of this Bill means, however, a good deal more than that, because it contains many other important provisions of a public nature which it would be unfortunate not to pass. I cannot conceal from myself for a moment, that if the proposal of the hon. Member is accepted, and you have already decided, Sir, as I understand it, and the hon. Member will not be able to vote upon the question himself—if the Motion is agreed to, it will strike a blow at every principle of Private Bill legislation in this House. So far as I understand the matter, it is the Railway Company themselves who come here to seek a remedy for the existing state of things, which, after mature reflection and consideration, and after consultation with the persons interested, they believe will place the railway in a paying position, and make it useful to the country through which it passes. The facts of the case are stated very frankly in the letter from the solicitor to the promoters of the Bill which the hon. Gentleman read. That gentleman says that the line ought never to have been constructed, but that is perfectly consistent with the fresh powers now asked for. These new powers have been rendered necessary, because this undertaking in its inception was promoted without sufficiently mature and proper deliberation. But having sustained these heavy losses, it is almost monstrous to maintain that this House ought not to afford some kind of relief to the unfortunate shareholders and bondholders, who are simply acting with the consent of the persons interested. The Company, in issuing further debenture stock to the amount of £200,000, make provision that it shall not take priority over the existing debenture stock. It will, therefore, interfere in no way with the interest which ought to be paid on the stock held by the hon. Member himself. Under these circumstances, and taking all the facts into consideration, especially bearing in mind the important bearing of such a question upon the general legislation of this House, I hope the House will have no hesitation whatever in refusing to accept the proposition of the hon. Member, but will endorse the decision of the Committee upon the Bill.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I will only add a few words by way of supplement to the observations which have just been made by the hon. Member opposite. I have nothing whatever to do with this railway. I never saw it; but, unfortunately, I have friends who are interested in it, and who certainly desire that the Bill should pass. There are reasons why the measure should pass far beyond those reasons for its rejection which have been stated by the hon. Member opposite. The line cannot be called a bogus line. A line between two such important towns as Preston and Southport, which has been constructed to serve the entire district of West Lancashire, cannot be called a bogus line. The capital invested in the line amounts to more than £1,100,000. It has been my duty more than once to call the attention of the House to undertakings of this nature. Very frequently, gentlemen, like the hon. Gentleman opposite, are tempted into projects of this kind by misleading prospectuses, and in the end the Companies have to come here to wind up the business. When they come here to wind up, we should, I think, treat them with the consideration they require. The Bill has not only received the general approval of the shareholders, but it was passed at a large public meeting of the shareholders—a fully representative meeting—and passed, I believe, unanimously. I understand that the hon. Member was not present at that meeting.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON: I was not invited.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: I am told that it was a regular Wharncliffe meeting, at which a large number of shareholders were present, and a great number of others represented by proxy. The line has cost a great deal of money, and the shareholders now say—"You must place other securities in front of ours in order to pay off some £160,000 of floating liabilities which will have to be taken up." All that these unfortunate shareholders desire is that they may be placed hereafter in a better position, and they are willing to place new securities in front of their own. No injury can be inflicted upon the securities which the hon. Gentleman opposite holds as a bondholder. Under these circumstances, I trust that the Bill will be passed in its present stage, and the result will be to place the concern, which is already in serious difficulties, in a more advantageous position so far as its own shareholders are concerned.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. COURTNEY) (Cornwall, Bodmin): I will not detain the House for more than a few minutes in regard to this Bill. The Bill came before me as an unopposed Bill, and, of course, I considered it upon its merits. The hon. Member for Stepney (Mr. Isaacson) is quite correct in describing the position of this Company as a most unfortunate one. The simple question now raised is whether the proposal made by the Company, and approved by the mass of the shareholders, is the best mode of enabling the Company to escape from its present unfortunate financial position. Upon its own merits, and in consideration of the support it has received, it certainly appeared to deserve the attention of the Committee. The hon. Member for Stepney now asks the House to refuse to ratify the decision to which the Committee upstairs has arrived. The Bill proposes to deal with a floating debt by the issue of preference shares. The hon. Member, as the holder of first preference stock, objects to that arrangement.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON: It was not on my own behalf that I spoke, but simply on behalf of the general public. My contention is that the general public ought not to be deluded into advancing money for a concern which will never, in all probability, pay a dividend.

Mr. COURTNEY: No doubt, the holders of preference shares are fully entitled to have their interests respected, but they accept and willingly support this scheme. As a matter of fact, the scheme is promoted entirely in their interest. If the hon. Gentleman objects to it, I must point out to him that he has not been so vigilant as he ought to have been. The Bill itself provides that the preference stock shall be issued with the sanction of three-fourths of the present holders, and I think that should be a sufficient guarantee that nothing will be done which is likely to be detrimental to the interests of the shareholders.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Bill *considered;* to be read the third time.

QUESTIONS.

GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON — NEUTRALITY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

Mr. GEDGE (Stockport) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Whether, in view of the fact that in order to secure the neutrality of the Government of Ceylon in matters of religion, the Church of England in that Island has been recently disestablished, and all grants of public money withdrawn from it, his attention has been called to the following occurrence, as reported in *La Mission Catholique* of Lyons, of the 18th February last, namely—

> "That certain Delegates sent by the Pope of Rome to Ceylon to announce that British India and Ceylon had been divided into Roman Catholic Dioceses, were conveyed to the shore at Colombo, in the Governor's State barge, with the Standard of the Pope flying at the prow, and the British Flag at the stern; that an Aide-de-camp welcomed the Delegates on the Governor's behalf, and that the band of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders received them with musical honours at the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Lucia;"

whether this official recognition of the Papal Delegates has the approval of Her Majesty's Government; and, if not, what steps will be taken to signify their disapprobation to the Governor and to prevent similar acts in future; whether he is aware that the present Government of Ceylon has renewed a practice (long since discontinued) of paying large sums of money for the repair of Buddhist Temples, e.g. (as appears in *The Colombo Gazette* of 10th December, 1886) Rs. 1940 for repairs to Mihintale Dagoba, and Rs. 1300 for repairs to Abhayagirige Dagoba, the money thus expended being taken from taxes which are partly paid by Christians; and also that, at the State reception of the present Governor, in Kandy, the blessing is publicly invoked by Buddhist priests; and, whether these endowments and encouragements of native religion have the approval of Her Majesty's Government; and, if not, whether steps will be taken to prevent their recurrence?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Sir Henry Holland) (Hampstead): The contributions in aid of the Church of England in Ceylon ceased, except to existing incumbents, from the 1st of July last. I have not any knowledge of the respect alleged to have been shown by the Governor to the Roman Catholic dignitaries; but their loyal prayers for the Queen were reported in an official despatch. In *The Ceylon Observer* of January 8, 1887, there is an account of the doings at St. Lucia's Cathedral; but no mention is made of the military band which is alleged to have "received them with musical honours." I have not had my attention drawn to the facts alleged by *La Mission Catholique* of Lyons. Consequently, I have not expressed any opinion on the alleged action of the Governor, nor do I see, at present, that a case has arisen for any interference. My Predecessor in Office approved the expenditure on the second Dagoba mentioned in the Question for purely archæological reasons; and I have just received the Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance, which includes the sum expended on the firs Dagoba for the same reason. The Governor states that he was advised that delay would probably render its ruin inevitable, or only to be averted at great expense, and that the sums expended in each case are only a portion of the cost of the repairs—apparently one-half—the remainder being repaid from private funds. I do not see any good ground for taking a different view from that of my Predecessor, so far as these two cases are concerned. I have received no Report or representations on this subject; but I have seen it stated in a Ceylon newspaper—*The Observer* of February 15, page 158—that Sir Arthur Gordon had said in the Legislative Council that—

> "There had been no religious rite in the ceremony at Badulla (which would seem to have been the occasion referred to), and that when good wishes were offered to him by any portion of Her Majesty's subjects, he should accept them with satisfaction."

I see no reason to apprehend that Sir Arthur Gordon has departed from the publicly declared policy of Her Majesty's late Government of adhering strictly in Ceylon, as elsewhere, to the principles of religious equality, and that every consideration possible should be shown to the feelings of all denominations in the Island, whether Christian or otherwise. I would add that I will ask Sir Arthur Gordon for a Report as to any further points upon which the hon. Member desires information.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) — TOWN COMMISSIONERS OF PORTADOWN.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, What sums have been received by the Town Commissioners of Portadown, or their clerk or representative, Mr. Robert M'Clatchy, on account of contracts for the repair or making of streets or footpaths, or any other work done within the municipal boundaries of Portadown, entered into between them and the Grand Jury of the County Armagh, in each of the years between 1st January, 1877, and 31st December, 1886; what sums of money have been expended by the Town Commissioners of Portadown, in execution of those contracts, in each year since 1st January, 1877; what sums have been paid as law costs during each year since 1st January, 1877; what have been the receipts in each year from the new markets, Portadown, since their erection, to 31st December, 1886, and the expenditure incurred for their management, during that period, for each year; and, what was the amount of debt due by the Commissioners of Portadown to the Government, and how much to private individuals?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: As the details of this Question are considerable, I am obliged to ask the hon. Member to accept the total figures for the periods named. The total receipts on account of contracts for the 10 years, including £500 due from 1876, amounted to £8,279, and the expenditure was £7,269. The law costs amounted to £312. The receipts of the new markets were £2,618, and the expenses of their management £1,797. The debt due to the Government was £1,623, and to private individuals £2,220.

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)—ATTACK UPON REV. MATHEW MACAULAY, PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER OF CASTLEBLAYNEY.

MR. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the attack alleged to have been made upon the Rev. Mathew Macaulay, Presbyterian Minister of Castleblayney, and his wife by an Orange drumming party on the 1st of July last on the public highway, the subsequent desecration of his church on 10th July, and the further alleged combination among certain persons to induce certain other persons, members of the Rev. Mr. Macaulay's congregation, to refrain from doing that which they had a right to do — namely, pay him a certain stipend, was reported to the police, and these charges investigated by County Inspector Ireland and Head Constable Gartland; and, whether these alleged offences are included in the Return relating to Agrarian Offences, Ireland, for the year 1886, under the heads "Sacrilege," "Riots and Affrays," "Intimidation," "Attacking Houses," "Injury to Property," "Injury to Place of Worship," "Obstructing Highway," or any other heading; and, if not, will he explain the reason for the omission?

THE PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel KING-HARMAN) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied) said: The occurrences referred to were carefully investigated by the officers named. The attack alleged to have been made by an Orange drumming party was inquired into at once by the District Inspector; but Mr. Macaulay declined to give the names of those who had interfered with him. On July 11 some persons obtained admission into Mr. Macaulay's church, and some Orange lilies were hung up, and the words "No Home Rule" were placed upon the pulpit. There are, I am informed, no grounds for believing that a combination was entered into by members of the rev. gentleman's congregation to prevent his being paid any portion of his stipend. The proceedings in question were not considered of sufficient gravity to be included in the Outrage Returns for 1886.

LIGHTHOUSE ILLUMINANTS—THE EXPERIMENTS AT SOUTH FORELAND.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether the attention of the Board of Trade has been called, through the President or otherwise, to Dr. Tyndall's letter to *The Times* of 7th instant, complaining of the manner in which the recent experiments made by the Trinity House with lighthouse illuminants at South Foreland were conducted; whether statements similar in tendency, and calling for further investigation of the subject, have reached him from other quarters, and appeared in *The Glasgow Herald* and other newspapers; and, whether, under these circumstances, the Board of Trade will give the matter further and careful consideration?

THE SECRETARY (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The statements referred to by the hon. Member have been brought under the notice of the Board of Trade. These statements, as far as can be seen, are repetitions of what has been urged before, and upon which a decision has been taken and placed before Parliament in a Return of the whole correspondence which has been circulated early in the present Session. In the present state of the Mercantile Marine Fund, which is not satisfactory, and having regard to the fact that experiments have been carried out so recently at a cost of £9,000, I hesitate to impose on the general body of shipowners an additional burden by suggesting the renewal of experiments which have not been asked for by either the Irish or the Scottish General Lighthouse Authority.

WAR OFFICE—THE ARMY PURCHASE COMMISSION.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT (Rochester) asked the Secretary of State for War, who are the Members of the "Army Purchase Commission" who were appointed, when it was resolved to abolish purchase in the Army, to regulate the sums payable to officers of the Army on their retirement from the Service; whether that Commission is intended to be a permanent institution; and, if so, what are the present duties of that Commission; what services its members have been rendering since they disposed of all matters connected with the abolition of purchase; how many sittings they have held, and the dates of those sittings, since 1871; and, what are, and have been, the salaries of the several Commissioners, in addition to any salaries they may already be in receipt of, in respect of any official capacity in which they may be engaged?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. E. STANHOPE) (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The members of the Army Purchase Commission appointed in 1871 were Sir Edward Lugard, Earl De La Warr, and Mr. O'Dowd. The Commission is necessarily temporary, and will expire when the functions entrusted to it cease. Its present duties have reference to the claims of officers under the Regulation of the Forces Act, 1871. About 2,000 such claims still remain. There are also more than 200 officers of the late Indian Artillery and Engineers whose claims to compensation under the Act of 1874 have to be dealt with. Her Majesty has further committed to the Commission the duty of advising the Secretary of State for War as to the compensation to be awarded to certain officers for loss inflicted on them by new retirement Regulations. The business of the Commissioners is not conducted at formal meetings, but from day to day as may be required. Originally the first Commissioner had £1,500 a-year, the second £750, each with the pay of a General Officer in addition, and Mr. O'Dowd was allowed £200 a-year as an addition to his salary as Deputy Judge Advocate General. The present Commissioners are only two—Mr. O'Dowd, who is paid as stated above, and Colonel Deedes, who does not receive any addition to his salary as an Assistant Under Secretary of State. Besides the Commissioners, the Secretary (Mr. Wyllie) receives £600 a-year. He was appointed, in July, 1886, for a limited term of five years.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—THE "MARY MARK."

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether it is the case that the Spanish Government is now willing to submit the matter of the *Mary Mark* to arbitration; and, whether he can state the terms of the reference?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): Yes, Sir; the Spanish Government, while refusing to grant an indemnity to the owners of the vessel, consent to have the matter settled by arbitration, which was the alternative course proposed to them. The arbitration will be regulated by terms settled between Her Majesty's Government and that of Spain.

TRADE AND COMMERCE—THE PETROLEUM TRADE.

MR. LAFONE (Southwark, Bermondsey) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this Session to regulate the petroleum trade, especially as regards the storage of petroleum in or near London and other large cities?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): It will depend on the course of Public Business whether I am able to introduce a Bill on this subject this Session; and I cannot at present make any definite statement as to the intentions of the Government.

RUSSIA—IMPRISONMENT OF MR. W. J. ROBINSON, A BRITISH SUBJECT.

MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether there is any truth in the statement made in *The Daily News* of the 21st instant, to the effect that William John Robinson, a British subject, has been detained in prison by the Russian Government for 11 months for infringing its passport regulations, seven months of such detention having elapsed before he was brought to trial, although he offered to find adequate bail for his appearance before the Kieff tribunal; and, if true, whether the Government will request the British Representative at St. Petersburg to endeavour to obtain the immediate release of Mr. Robinson?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): As I stated on March 17, Robinson was arrested for travelling from Kieff to Odessa without a proper passport. He was detained in prison eight months before being sentenced on the 2nd of January last to four months' imprisonment. Her Majesty's Consul General at Odessa has notified the case to Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, who received instructions to inquire and report on the matter, and has now been reminded of it.

EGYPT—ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS—MR. CLIFFORD LLOYD.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether Her Majesty's Government have any objection to lay upon the Table of the House, the Correspondence relating to Mr. Clifford Lloyd's removal from Egypt, which the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated in the House on July 3rd, 1884, was owing to certain painful differences of opinion between Mr. Lloyd and various high officials, both English and Egyptian?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I must object to lay upon the Table the Correspondence relating to Mr. Clifford Lloyd's return from Egypt. He was not removed, but left it on the expiration of his leave of absence from Ireland, during which he was temporarily employed in Egypt. The "painful differences" mentioned by my Predecessor in no way affected his high character, or detracted from the excellence of his work.

POST OFFICE—CREDITS TO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS, 1886.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he can state the amount which the British Post Office paid or credited to the Australian Governments in 1886, out of the sum collected in the United Kingdom upon letters, &c., for Australia?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The amount which the British Post Office will pay or credit to the Australian Governments in 1886 out of the postage collected in the United Kingdom upon letters, &c., for Australia may be estimated at about £50,500. The exact amount is not known, because all the accounts for the year have not yet been furnished by the Colonies.

POST OFFICE (POSTAL SERVICES)—CONVEYANCE OF THE INDIAN AND AUSTRALIAN MAILS—FOREIGN SUBSIDIES.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, What sum was paid the French and Italian Governments for the conveyance of Indian and Australian mails in the years 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, and 1886 respectively?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): The annual payments to the French and Italian Governments for the conveyance of Indian and Australian Mails since 1878 were as follows:—

Year.	Payment to France.	Payment to Italy.
	£	£
1879	40,605	26,622
1880	44,609	30,162
1881	46,294	31,395
1882	47,964	32,549
1883	49,913	33,926
1884	53,140	40,115
1885	52,922	40,268
1886	54,044	43,840

BUTTER SUBSTITUTES BILL AND OLEOMARGARINE BILL — NOMINATION OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, When the Select Committee on the Butter Substitutes Bill and Oleomargarine Bill will be nominated; and, whether the Committee will have power to take evidence as arranged with the promoters of the Bills?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Select Committee on this matter will be nominated forthwith. If the Committee think fit to take evidence, the Board of Trade will have no objection.

INDIA (MADRAS) — SUSPENSION OF MR. CROLE, COLLECTOR OF MADURA.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether the late Secretary of State, the Earl of Kimberley, recalled the suspension of Mr. Crole, Collector of Madura, and ordered the Madras Government to restore him to an office of corresponding rank and emolument to that of which he had been deprived when suspended; whether Viscount Cross further ordered that Mr. Crole's salary for the six months during which he had been suspended should be refunded to him; whether the Madras Government has transferred Mr. Crole from the Executive branch of the Service, in which he has served with distinction for 24 years, to the judicial branch, in which he has no experience and no claim for promotion; and, whether the Judgeship at Arcot, in which Mr. Crole has been appointed, is inferior in rank and emolument to the Collectorship of Madura held by him before his suspension?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): After Mr. Crole had been suspended for rather more than six months the Earl of Kimberley directed that the supension should then cease, and that Mr. Crole should be employed again—but not in Madura—as soon as there was a fitting opportunity in an office of corresponding rank and emolument. On further evidence Viscount Cross made the order referred to in the second paragraph of the Question. The Executive and Judicial branches of the Service are parallel, with corresponding rank and emoluments. It rests entirely with the Local Governments to decide in which branch any particular officer shall, for the time being, be employed. I am informed that the Judgeship at Arcot is exactly equivalent in rank and emolument to the Collectorship at Madura.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND)—CONSTITUTION AND FUNCTIONS.

Mr. J. W. BARCLAY (Forfarshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, in view of the dissatisfaction which has been expressed in Scotland with the Fishery Board as at present constituted, and the expiry in 1887 of the term of office of the present Members of the Board, the Government will defer making any new appointments until there has been an opportunity for discussing the functions and constitution of the Board?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): I beg to refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on the 31st ultimo to an almost exactly similar Question. No new appointment to the Scotch Fishery Board will be made until next October, when the term of office of six of the members of the present Board expires; and there will be ample time for the hon. Member, in the meanwhile, to raise any discussion on the constitution of the Board that he may think necessary.

ADMIRALTY—VACANCIES—CIRCULARS.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, What has been the result of the inquiry promised by him on March 24th, with reference to a statement made by a Mr. Field at a meeting of the Civil Service Supply Association, as to Circulars being sent out in connection with the candidature for the Admiralty Vacancy marked "On Her Majesty's Service," and at the expense of the country; and, if the statement in question has been found to be correct, what steps, if any, have been taken in the matter?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): The matter has been fully investigated, and it appears that about 25 Circulars were issued improperly. Suitable notice has been taken, and the postage has been recovered. Steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of such an irregularity. The Circulars in question were issued for the purpose of preventing clerks on full pay from becoming Directors of the Civil Service Supply Association.

THE NEWSPAPER PRESS—CONVEYANCES OF PARCELS BY TRAINS—THE ALLEGED POST OFFICE ORDER.

Mr. PULESTON asked the Postmaster General, Whether his attention had been called to a statement in *The Daily News* as to an order said to have emanated from the Post Office with respect to the carrying of Press matters by train?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): I am obliged to my hon. Friend for the opportunity of answering this Question. The statements contained in the paragraphs to which he has referred appear to have originated in an entire misconception. Press matter is not, in the view of the Post Office—nor, I should think, in that of any persons capable of construing the law—to be regarded as of the nature of a letter. It is much more closely allied to goods. And being regarded as goods, it follows that manuscript for the Press exempts also any covering letter relating to it from the Regulations attaching to other correspondence. It was never contemplated by the recent Circular to interfere with the present system of transmitting Press matter by train; but only to call the attention of the Railway Companies to a practice, which we believe to be increasing, of forwarding ordinary letters under the guise of railway parcels, to the injury of the Revenue.

PARLIAMENT—RULES OF DEBATE—OFFENSIVE IMPUTATIONS ON MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE—MR. DILLON AND THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Sir, I wish, with the permission of the House, to make a very short personal statement with reference to one of a similar character made yesterday by the hon. Member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) when I was unfortunately absent. The hon. Member is reported to have said that on Monday last I stated in this House—

> "That two gentlemen, who were well known and who were acting for months under my (Mr. Dillon's) direction, went about Ireland counselling assassination, and when I directed his attention to the fact that these gentlemen were responsible to me and acted under my instructions he repeated the charge, emphasized it, and said that those charges were made in the period to which I refer."

And the hon. Member further said—

> "I think I am entitled to ask that he"—that is myself—"shall furnish me with the particulars of dates, and extracts from speeches, and references to the circumstances to which he alluded, when I shall be able to show that his statement is entirely without foundation."

Now, Sir, on Monday last I was referring to certain statements which had been made in *The Times* newspaper. The importance of those statements and the sufficiency of the evidence by which they are supported are matters of opinion, and, undoubtedly, may be questions of argument in this House; but I submit that I was perfectly entitled, as a point of Order, to make reference to the statements which have been published in *The Times* newspaper; and, further, that I was morally justified, under the circumstances, in making the reference to them that I did. Further, I submit to the House that, having stated what was the source of my information, and what was the authority on which those statements had been made, I was not bound, nor was it in any way necessary for me, to attempt to prove or substantiate the statements which had been made. Had I made the charge entirely upon my own responsibility, the case, it seems to me, would have been altogether different. But, having repeatedly pointed out that I was only referring to the statements which had been made in *The Times*, it appeared to me, and still appears to me, that there was no responsibility resting on me to prove or substantiate those statements. Now, Sir, the statements I must point out are not in any sense my statements, but statements made on the responsibility of *The Times*. Neither I nor, as far as I am aware, *The Times* have made any charge against the hon. Member for East Mayo. What I did was to call attention to certain allegations which have been made in that newspaper. I said—

> "The assertion made in *The Times* was that of these men I have mentioned some have in speeches advocated assassination and that others have been implicated in conspiracies of murder as well."

The hon. Member interrupted me and said—

> "I was the chief organizer of the Land League, and these gentlemen acted under me during all the time they were agents of the Association, and I wish to ask the noble Marquess when they made such speeches."

I did not, as the hon. Member yesterday stated, repeat or emphasize the charge; but what I proceeded to do was, on the spur of the moment, to give the hon. Member the references he desired. From what the hon. Member is reported to have said yesterday, I infer that he referred especially to the names of two gentlemen who had been acting under him when he was the chief organizer of the Land League. I believe, but am not sure, that he referred only to Boyton and Sheridan. If he refers to other persons, whose names I have mentioned, I shall be able also to give him the references on which I relied. These references are entirely contained in the articles in *The Times* newspaper. [*Cries of* "Oh!" *and derisive cheers from the Irish Members.*] I think I have already indicated that I shall confine myself entirely to the references which are contained in those articles, because it was entirely to those articles that I was referring; and if I were to attempt to substantiate those charges and allegations made in *The Times* by going outside the references they themselves have made I should be making myself responsible, which I have not done, for the charges themselves. I can give the hon. Member the references in *The Times* referring to Boyton, and the first of those references is a speech delivered by Boyton on March 5, 1881. *The Times* article—page 16 of the pamphlet—says—

> "This paid officer of the Constitutional movement said—'We have seen plenty of landlords and agents that deserve to be shot at any man's hands. I have always denounced the commission of outrages by night; but meet him in the broad daylight, and if you must blow out his brains blow them out in the daytime.' Mr. Parnell, it is true, repudiated this passage on behalf of his agent. But Mr. Forster utterly rejected Mr. Boyton's words even when endorsed by his principal, and we have already seen reason to doubt the perfect fidelity of Mr. Parnell's reminiscences."

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): What is the date of that speech?

The Marquess of HARTINGTON: I have already said that it was delivered on the 5th of March, 1881. There is another reference to another speech, which appears to have been made earlier—namely, in May, 1880—

> "'There was a little story,' observes the same speaker at Dunmanway, County Cork, in May, 1880, 'told by Mr. Parnell, at a meeting in the Rotunda, at the conclusion of his address, to the effect that a certain American gentleman

> came upon the platform and said—"Parnell, there is 25 dollars, five for bread and 20 for lead." Now that simple little bit of humour has put your hereditary enemy in a great flutter. . . . . I am authorized to tell you here . . . . . that those 20 dollars are perfectly safe, and that . . . . . we are not going to tell Mr. Forster what we are going to do with the 20 dollars that have since swelled into 20,000.' "

That is the reference made by *The Times* newspaper to Mr. Boyton. With regard to Sheridan, my reference was to the following extract from a speech of his on the 1st of August, I believe 1880; but I am not absolutely clear whether the date was 1880 or 1881. The passage will be found on page 17 of the pamphlet—

> "On the 1st of August Mr. P. J. Sheridan, the 'chief organizer in Connaught,' urged the people to assert their rights, and if they did not get them through their Members of Parliament, he would ask them to ring out their voices from the muzzles of Minie rifles."

The references to P. J. Sheridan are not references confined to his speeches. I find on page 26 of *The Times* pamphlet that an allusion is made to what passed between Captain O'Shea and Mr. Forster in relation to the release of the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) from Kilmainham. *The Times* pamphlet says—

> "Captain O'Shea told Mr. Forster how the 'Constitutional organization' would be adapted to prevent crime. 'The conspiracy (or organization), he said, which had been used to get up Boycotting and outrages will now be used to put them down.' He added that 'Parnell hoped to make use of a certain person and get him back from abroad, as he knew all the details (of conspiracy or agitation) in the West.' That person's name was P. J. Sheridan, Mr. Parnell's sometime colleague on the Central League. He was at this period in disguise, 'coming backwards and forwards from Egan to the outrage-mongers in the West.' "

The next reference is at page 28 of the same pamphlet, and is connected with the trials which took place. It has reference to the informer Carey, and says—

> "A man named Farrell turned Queen's evidence. Criminals more guilty and deeper in the conspiracy grew uneasy for their necks. Among the prisoners was James Carey, who had been just elected a Town Councillor for Dublin on the recommendation of Mr. William O'Brien, as a candidate 'untrammelled with Castle influence.' This man was suddenly transferred from the dock to the witness table. He appalled the civilized world with the mysteries of iniquity he in part revealed. Carey swore that he had been a Fenian, and that Thomas Brennan, secretary to Mr. Parnell's 'Constitutional organization,' had previously filled that same office in the ranks of the Fenian Brotherhood. He swore that in November, 1881, a 'Mr. Walsh,' from the North of England, came over to establish 'a Society that would make history.' This Society was called 'The Irish Invincibles;' its object was 'to remove all tyrants from the country,' and the Park murders and the murderous attacks on Mr. Justice Lawson and Mr. Field were its work. Carey swore that Walsh introduced him to P. J. Sheridan, then disguised as 'the Rev. Father Murphy;' that Sheridan—the 'chief organizer' of the 'Constitutional agitation' in Connaught—stated he 'had been in the country to extend the branches of the Invincibles;' and that on another occasion this colleague and paid officer of Mr. Parnell undertook to see to the despatch of arms to the murderers from London."

The only other remaining reference to P. J. Sheridan to which I shall call attention is on pages 29 and 30 of the same pamphlet. It is thus—

> "In March a second gang of murderous conspirators, known as the 'Patriotic Brotherhood,' were tried at the Antrim Assizes. It was proved that P. J. Sheridan, 'our great organizer in Mayo,' as the chief local assassin styled him, had taken a principal part in forming this Association—'an Association,' said Mr. Justice Lawson, 'avowedly established for the purpose of committing murder.' "

Now, Sir, I believe I am correct in saying that it was in reference to Boyton and Sheridan that the hon. Member called on me to give references in support of the allegations to which I have referred. I have done so from the articles in *The Times*, to which I referred at the time; and I submit, Sir, I have given satisfaction to the hon. Member, and in doing that I have done all that I am called upon to do in reply to the statement which the hon. Member made last night.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I trust I may be permitted to give an answer to the remarks of the noble Marquess. I rise, under somewhat unusual circumstances, to say a few words of personal explanation after the remarks of the noble Marquess. Now, Sir, I do not complain of the conduct of the noble Marquess now. On the contrary, I thank him, because he has given me an opportunity of meeting these charges in a detailed fashion and replying to them; but I am bound to say I cannot understand on what principle he lays down this proposition—that a Gentleman, a Member of this House, and, above all, a Member of this House commanding such widespread attention in the country as the noble Marquess, is entitled to get up in this House and give currency by his speeches to the foulest and most criminal charges against other Members of the House, stating that he considers because he constantly referred to these charges not as made on his own responsibility, but as having appeared in *The Times* newspaper, that he, therefore, washes his hands of all responsibility for repeating them. I must, at the outset, express my entire dissent from any such proposition. *The Times* newspaper is one thing, the noble Marquess is another. I have been assailed in *The Times* newspaper by these articles; and *The Times* newspaper might have continued to reprint them to the Day of Judgment, and I never should have taken any notice of them. In this wretched publication, which I yesterday saw for the first time, having invested 1*d.* in it, I read an account of the quotations given by the noble Marquess, and this wretched publication would have gone unnoticed by me for ever unless the statements had been repeated by the noble Marquess as a Member of this House, and one whose character before the country requires that I should take notice of them. I must say that I do not consider it is fair for any Member of this House, and especially for a noble Lord in the position of the noble Marquess, to take that stand and say that he is entitled to repeat the charges, however unfounded and foul they may have been—because his contention is that he never looked into the original evidence at all—and, in the course of debate in this House, to repeat those charges, no matter how unfounded, foul, and dishonouring they may be, and to give them the widespread publicity which attaches to every speech made by him. I gladly recognize in the opportunity offered to me by the statement he has made to-night, that the noble Marquess has done everything in his power to make amends. I am perfectly ready now, he having given me the references to the speeches, though I feel considerable difficulty in going into this matter in detail—and yet I do not see that I have a choice—but I am ready now to show that these charges are absolutely and utterly unfounded. The first charge, he stated—and in my own justification for intervening the other night I may point out that when he said that no attack has been made on the Member for East Mayo, but on these two gentlemen, it was well known that in attacking them he was making a personal attack on me, because they acted on my instructions as agents for the League—referred to a speech of Mr. Boyton on the 5th of March, 1881. Mr. Boyton was then acting as my agent. He delivered a speech in the County Kerry, for which he was arrested on the 9th of March and was committed to Kilmainham Gaol. From that hour to this I have not been responsible for anything he did. Therefore, if that was a true reference, no opportunity was ever given to him to account for that speech, for he was arrested a few days afterwards in consequence of having delivered it, and he never afterwards acted as agent for the Land League in Ireland. But I am bound to say, if that is the only reference to Mr. Boyton, that when I did get an opportunity—for I also was arrested and committed to prison at the time he was in Kilmainham—I had never heard of the cause of his arrest until the debate in this House, when Mr. Forster produced a police report of the speech, and read out these very words as a justification of Mr. Boyton's arrest—words which I never heard of until that day. I challenged Mr. Boyton afterwards, and he assured me that he never uttered such words; and the police reports, as the House will agree, have in many cases proved to be grossly and scandalously incorrect, as in the case of the Parnell trial. He told me that the report was grossly and scandalously incorrect. But even if he did use the words, the point I want to make is that I was not responsible for them. He was immediately arrested for making the speech, and was never afterwards an agent of the League. That is one instance of the fairness of these charges. That is the only charge made against Mr. Boyton, except a vague charge about his telling a story of the man in America who was reported to have sent 25 dollars, and to have said that five of them were for bread and 20 for lead. He made some joke about this. I was present, and we all knew what it was he meant. These men were men who belonged to the physical force party in America, as most of our people there did, and it meant that if Mr. Parnell stirred up a conspiracy in Ireland, there were five dollars to go for bread and 20 to supply for overthrowing the Government. The meaning of that was thoroughly well understood. The question of assassination never entered into the matter at all. That disposes of the second charge. I come now to the reference given to Mr. Sheridan. It is to the 1st of August, 1880. On that day Mr. Sheridan made a speech, I believe before he was appointed an agent of the League, advising the people to try to get their demands Constitutionally through Members of Parliament. He said that if they could do that he should be glad, and if they failed, then they should ring out their demands through Minié rifles. Well, under the influence of strong passion, I have said something of the same kind in this House myself. I do not say that it was a wise or a sensible thing; but to say that it is an incitement to assassination is the most base calumny that could be uttered. Mr. Sheridan was known to the people, and had long associated with the physical force party, and the meaning was this—

> "I have now joined the Parliamentary Party, and I call upon you to act with them and try Parliamentary methods, and if you do not succeed I shall advise you to go back to the old physical force party."

That was the distinct meaning of Mr. Sheridan, and the charge that that was an incitement to assassination is the basest attempt to twist the meaning of words which I have ever heard in my life. The meaning is manifest, and the people thoroughly understood the meaning of it. I am reluctantly obliged, as the noble Marquess went on and gave other references, to follow him. Now, first with regard to the references from this precious penny pamphlet. On page 26 there is reported a conversation with Mr. Forster, relating to what took place between himself and Captain O'Shea. That matter has been fully threshed out in this House half-a-dozen times already, and to bring it forward at this time of day as a fresh charge against the hon. Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) or myself is so absurd that I hardly think it worth while to enter into it.

THE MARQUESS OF HARTINGTON: I wish to point out that I certainly made no charge against the hon. Member, or against the hon. Member for the City of Cork. *The Times* made these charges.

MR. DILLON: *The Times* concludes its articles by saying that, at the time we managed the Land League, we associated with and used assassins. That is the winding up and conclusion of the whole matter. The statement is that all the executive of the League were in the habit of associating with and using assassins, and it is for that reason that these charges are made against well-known men. The whole basis and superstructure of *The Times* article rests upon that allegation—that these men acted as our agents. I admit that they did act as our agents. But I say that this is a matter which has been fully dealt with over and over again. Now I come to the reference on page 28, where the noble Marquess read a passage to the effect that—

> "Carey swore that he had been a Fenian, and that Thomas Brennan, secretary to Mr. Parnell's 'Constitutional organization,' had previously filled that same office in the ranks of the Fenian Brotherhood. He swore that in November, 1881, a 'Mr. Walsh,' from the North of England, came over to establish a 'Society that would make history.' This Society was called 'The Irish Invincibles;' its object was to remove all tyrants from the country."

Now, there are no dates given to this. That is an old trick of *The Times*. Mr. P. J. Sheridan ceased to have any connection with the Constitutional organization in the first week in April, 1881, when he was arrested and put in Kilmainham Gaol. From that day forward he had no connection with the Constitutional organization, nor with the hon. Member for the City of Cork, and the date to which reference is given — namely, the evidence of Carey—is the month of November, 1881, exactly six months after Mr. Sheridan had ceased to have any connection with the organization of the Land League, and one month after the Constitutional organization had been dissolved. This is the whole theory, and we are to be held responsible to all futurity for the acts of men who were our agents, and who may have adopted other courses after our organization broke up. The next reference is to page 29, and the extract is as follows:—

> "In March a second gang of murderous conspirators, known as the 'Patriotic Brotherhood,' were tried at the Antrim Assizes. It was proved that P. J. Sheridan, 'our great orga-

nizer in Mayo,' as the chief local assassin styled him, had taken a principal part in forming this Association—'an Association,' said Mr. Justice Lawson, 'avowedly established for the purpose of committing murder.' Not only was this murder club organized by one of Mr. Parnell's official 'chief organizers,' but its victims were selected by Mr. Parnell's organization. The Brotherhood kept regular books. 'Under date May 24, 1882,' the Judge noted in his charge, 'there was the entry—"At the request of the Land League, conveyed through Thomas Murphy, men have been worn in specially to kill Mr. Brooke."' "

Now, anybody reading that extract would suppose that "our great organizer in Mayo" was the organizer of the Constitutional Association. The organization is stated to have been re-founded in the spring of 1882, six months after Mr. Forster had suppressed the Land League, and after Mr. Sheridan had ceased to act as agent of the League. *The Times* goes on to say that we pointed out by this organization the persons who were to be assassinated, and that men had been sworn in specially to kill Mr. Brooke. That proves that the whole business was a bogus transaction, because on the 28th of May, 1882, the Land League had ceased to exist for more than six months. I regret that I should have been compelled to take up the time of the House with this statement, and I once more beg to protest against the practice which has arisen in this House of bringing forward charges of this nature, a practice which, if continued, must be destructive of all order and decency of debate.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): May I put a question to the Government? I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether it would be possible to make inquiry and see whether there exists among the records in Dublin Castle any copy of the Crown indictment and depositions of the Crown witnesses in the State trial which took place in Dublin in 1881, and also a copy of the evidence of the Crown witnesses in the trial of the Invincibles, which took place in 1883? I would further ask whether it is possible to produce a copy of the Crown indictment, and the depositions of the Crown witnesses with regard to the Assizes at Antrim, to which attention has been drawn; and whether it would be possible to summarize or produce *in extenso* these documents, and lay them on the table as a Parliamentary Paper?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to the question of my noble Friend, I have to say that I will communicate at once with the Law Officers of the Crown in Ireland, and ascertain whether it is possible to comply with the suggestion he has made.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that he thinks it is possible to lay the depositions before Parliament?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: I do not say whether it is possible or right to do so; but I will communicate with the Law Officers of the Crown upon the subject.

PARLIAMENT—BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

In reply to Mr. Childers (Edinburgh, S.),

The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster) said, that he had ascertained that it would be to the convenience of the House that the arrangement with regard to the taking of Supply on Monday next should be departed from, in order that the remaining Resolutions on the Budget might be proceeded with.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

MARKET RIGHTS.

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton), in rising to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire as to the extent to which market rights, and rights affecting places where markets are held, are in the hands (1) of public bodies, and (2) of private persons, or bodies of persons. To inquire generally how such rights are exercised, and particularly what accommodation is given in return for charges levied; in what ratio market tolls stand to the value of goods on which they are levied, and how far the regulation of markets by means of bye-laws or otherwise, market rents, stallages, and tolls, and tolls affecting market towns, are restrictive of trade. To report as to the advisability of compelling the transfer of all such rights to local authorities; of prohibiting the farming of tolls and stallages, of prohibiting the placing of restrictions on the sale of goods in a market that may be lawfully sold elsewhere, of providing by means of the incomes from markets or otherwise for the extension of the capital account chargeable to such markets, and for declaring all markets to be free and open,"

said, he trusted that the Government would be able to accept the Motion, which in no sense raised a Party question. The real object of his Motion was to decrease the cost of food to the poor, to increase the facilities of the poor for obtaining good food at moderate prices, and to encourage the augmentation by increased cultivation, stimulated by early sale, of home food produce. At the present time market rights and tolls in many places had the contrary effect. Whatever might be the result of this Motion, and whatever action the Government might feel compelled to take on this Motion, he desired to acknowledge the courteous consideration which had been given to the subject by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board. He only proposed, in his speech, to deal with England and Wales; but the terms of his Motion applied to the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, and he trusted that some Scotch and Irish Members would give the House the benefit of their special knowledge. As to Scotland, he was personally without sufficient information, though it was clear that the evil did not now exist in Scotland to the same extent as in the rest of the United Kingdom. There was a Report of a Select Committee on Market Tolls in Ireland in 1826, from which he would read a few lines. The Committee reported that—

> "Many most exorbitant and illegal charges are still made in markets, seaports, and fairs in Ireland, all of the most injurious tendency in checking commerce and industry. Several of these charges appear to your Committee to be so burthensome and oppressive as to produce the most mischievous restraint both on the sale and transit of commodities."

And they said—

> "Nor are these examples of violation of the general principles of the Common Law the only abuses existing; the Statute Law has been violated in many important particulars."

And they reported specifically that—

> "The intentions of the Legislature, in exempting from burthen the food of the lower classes of the community, have been defeated."

He believed that Irish Members sitting near him would be able to state that many of these evils were as bad in Ireland to-day as they were 60 years ago, and this although a Royal Commission, in 1853, had again strongly reported against the same evil. Members from Ireland had sought ineffectually to deal with this by legislation. Bills had been introduced Session after Session into that House by Irish Members, which had been blocked both by Tories and Liberals, and had never even been discussed. The grievance which was, and still is, endured in Ireland is the grievance which now exists in England and Wales. He submitted that a Royal Commission was absolutely necessary in order that the matter might be dealt with in a thorough manner. Neither the House nor the Government had at present sufficient information on which to legislate wisely. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) might say that the Government intended to deal with the evils complained of in a Bill which they were prepared to introduce with regard to local government; but he (Mr. Bradlaugh) understood that such a Bill would only propose to give Local Authorities power to acquire rights. That was not enough, because in many scores of cases the Local Authorities were as bad offenders as private individuals. There were so many instances of the misuse of power by local authorities that it was absolutely necessary that information upon the subject should be obtained by a Royal Commission before it was possible to legislate. In any case it would be necessary to prevent local authorities from farming tolls to private persons. It might also be said by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board that his Department carefully revised all the bye-laws of local authorities, and that there could be no fear of such things happening as he (Mr. Bradlaugh) complained of. This was no doubt true; but he would point out that this care had not been exercised at all times, and that there were in force at the present time in different parts bye-laws of a very objectionable character. It was not enough to give the Local Authorities power to purchase; there must be some restriction put upon them as to what they should pay. He was quite prepared to accept the position that where the present local representatives under a charter had held markets, and had done anything for the promotion of trade in a district, they should be compensated. Where the local representatives of the holders of the original charters were simply leeches sucking the vitality of the districts and giving nothing in return, hindering food from reaching the poor, driving the sale of food into "rings," limiting the number of shops, and taxing the local produce that came to market so that it did not pay the people in the neighbourhood to grow it—in such cases the local authorities, on acquiring the market rights, ought not to be permitted to pay the same price for them that they would rightly pay where an owner had done a number of things to promote the convenience of buyers and sellers, and to encourage the trade of the district. He had obtained last year an unopposed Return of market rates and tolls. But it did not include any of the many and some most objectionable markets within the densely populated Metropolitan area; in several cases there was a suggestive deficiency of information; and in others the information given was misleading. At Slaithwaite, in Yorkshire, the Local Board stated in the Parliamentary Return that they held their market rights by prescription, which was the poetical word for "cool, impudent presumption." Over and over again it was said that the gross receipts were "not known." Of course, they were "not known" to anyone but the person who got them. And he was told that in several cases the receivers of the tolls had said that it was not the business of the House of Commons to inquire into the matter, and, therefore, they did not intend to give any information. In reply to the question whether the market was held in a street, the answer "No" was given in many cases, thereby suggesting that some sheltered place was provided, whereas the market was held on an open space known as the market-place, and no shelter of any kind was provided. Originally these market rights had been Prerogatives of the Crown, and grants had been made of them to ladies and gentlemen in recognition of some service rendered to the Crown, the service being deemed a sufficient consideration at the moment, although it was one which in modern times no one would deem worthy of such a recognition. Sometimes the consideration was a valid one. There were charters which were granted for the protection of trade. Often the lord of the manor provided armed men to protect the market and those who attended it; and in connection with it there was a Court for the settlement of disputes which was known as "Pie Powder Court." Although some of the Courts remained in name, all that kind of responsibility ceased centuries ago. The rights granted often included the power to set up a fair or a market in the neighbourhood, and under cover of a right of this kind 300 or 400 hawkers had been prevented entering the district of Rochdale for the purpose of supplying the people with food and vegetables. Some of the charters dated back to the time of Henry I., Henry II., and Henry III. Some of the toll receivers had no charters. If they had had them they had lost them; but they still took the money. In some cases they took it quite illegally; but the local magistrates enforced the claim to the privilege as their predecessors had done. The old law as to market rights, and which is still the enforcible law, is—

> "The King is the sole judge where fairs and markets ought to be kept; and, therefore, it is said that if he grants a market to be kept in such a place, which happens not to be convenient for the country, yet the subjects can go to no other."—(*Bacon's Abridgment: Title, Fairs and Markets.*)

"If a person hath a right to a fair or market, and another erects a fair or market near his," the charter owner may prevent all sales even by hawkers or shopkeepers, and this "although the new market be holden on a different day." Under this, charter owners in East London had, as against the Great Eastern Railway, been able to do much mischief. The Clerk of the Whitechapel District Board of Works had forwarded him a long statement with respect to the evil effects of the monopoly existing in the Spitalfields Market. He would only trouble the House with one passage from the letter—

> "This Board, having been informed of the Motion which stands in your name for Friday on this subject, have thought that their experience as to Spitalfields Market, which demonstrates how markets of insignificant origin may become very formidable monopolies, may be of some value to you as a matter of information."

Important as was this Report, he preferred to venture to appeal to the hon. Member for Preston, who had just had specially to investigate this matter upstairs, to give the House the benefit of his special knowledge on this subject. The effect of the existence of private market rights was to unduly increase the price of food, to limit in many places the sources of food supply, to throw land out of cultivation, so far as varieties of dairy and market produce were concerned, and to facilitate in hands of private owners, or where the market rights were farmed, the formation of "rings" for keeping up the price of food, and particularly of butchers' meat. In many places the poor had had no opportunity of buying Australian or other imported dead meat as such; but as large quantities were known to have entered the districts, it had, no doubt, been sold as English meat at English prices. In such places as he had described the poor were robbed in consequence of the existence of those rights. The regulations with respect to the sale of perishable food, such as fish and vegetables, and sometimes for the limiting of the number of shops in particular trades, were such that if they were framed with the intention of preventing the poor from buying cheaply they could not have been better devised for that purpose. The existence of these market rights created a class of middlemen, who hindered distribution and rendered it costly. If owners of land looked to their own interest they would prevent toll-keepers from interfering as they did with the sale of produce and consequent cultivation of land, and would thus increase their rents. Market rights, as he had explained, were claimed under charter, or letters patent; nearly all were granted in feudal times in connection with manors under conditions as to population no longer even comparable, and with responsibilities and duties now never performed. The charters were granted for no real service or consideration other than the duty of protecting the traders at the market, of providing sufficient accommodation for buyers and sellers, and of administering justice in connection with the market trade as to quality, weight, and so on. There were three classes of owners of market rights — Cities or boroughs with market charters or claiming prescription; private individuals, under charters or alleged prescription, this last being often a species of what in the Colonies would be described as "impudent squatting;" local authorities authorized to establish markets under statutes, these now chiefly governed by the Public Health Act, 1875, Sections 166-168; where local authorities claim to levy market tolls by prescription this claim was clearly unfounded, as the whole of these local authorities must have been instituted since the Public Health Act, 1848, and many since the Local Government Act, 1858. He would take as a sample of many from page 72 of the Return in the case of Slaithwaite. In many cases local authorities had acquired chartered rights, paying heavily for them, thus unduly taxing food of the district to recoup outlay. He agreed that in all cases local authorities ought to acquire and did not object to the toll-owners being paid fully where some consideration was shown in providing market premises; but he did object to 20 years' or 25 years' purchase, or a heavy rent being given where the toll-owner was only a leech. In many cases the local authorities had been compelled to pay enormous prices for the charter rights they acquired. He did not propose to give the Royal Commission any power over contracts which had been completed, but it was necessary to show the House the kind of cases he desired to prevent in future. In 1846 Manchester purchased manorial rights and property at the cost of £200,000. He thought that more than £170,000 represented the value of the manorial rights. Since then Manchester had to pay £359,000 for its own markets. The food of the district had been unduly burdened by the payment of that £170,000. In Bradford the Corporation had acquired on lease from the toll-owners the market rights for a payment of a rent of £5,000 a-year. The markets were held in the streets until the Corporation leased the rights, so that the charter went back to a time when Bradford was a little hamlet. This £5,000 a-year taken from the Corporation was a tax on the food of the poor. In Huddersfield the Return was modestly reticent; but as far as he could learn some £44,000 had been paid for the street right. There were many cases of absolutely illegal assumption of rights and of illegal levy of tolls. He would take as samples from page 91 of the Return, the Nottingham Highway Board at Basford, and from page 64 a Market Committee at Fareham. There were many cases in which the Return lacked frankness on these points. In Ware a private owner was levying tolls. That could not be by prescription or by charter, because the market was established on the 24th of March, 1886. That market was chiefly accessible by a bridge, and there were tolls for the bridge which came into effect only on market days for cattle, sheep, and pigs, and thus the food of the unfortunate people of Ware was doubly burdened. Even in municipal boroughs the markets were very often in private hands. In Rochdale the old market proprietors got a Statute passed in the Reign of George IV., which showed how iniquitous some Private Bill legislation could be. They claimed exclusive rights over the whole of Rochdale, though the borough limits had been since largely extended. There had been taken from every hawker who came within the borough 30*s*., and some who could not pay it were sent to gaol. One of the hawkers went to a lawyer, who held that the old proprietors had no right to levy such a tax. Then they shut every hawker out of Rochdale, a borough which had set a better example than any town in England, or in the world, in its co-operative endeavours for procuring necessaries of life for its people. At least, the House would be with him in slaying this iniquitous usurpation. He had received from 2,000 to 3,000 letters dealing with this subject, but he would content himself with specifying four instances in which these tolls caused considerable hardship to the population of those particular towns. The towns he would select were Market Drayton, Fleetwood, Bridgwater, and Taunton. In the first-mentioned case tolls were charged on all vegetables, though sold in the open streets, and no accommodation was provided. The restrictions were of such a nature that people who were growing agricultural produce and bringing it into the town would not now do so in consequence of the annoyance. The result had been that the trade had fallen into the hands of middlemen. At Fleetwood hawking was forbidden from door to door, and it had been announced that farmers were to be forbidden to sell milk to customers except in the place where they paid toll. At Taunton butchers were not allowed to open shops except on payment of £20; and at Bridgewater they allowed only a certain number of shops connected with particular trades in the town. What was the effect of limiting the number of shops in this way? To heighten the prices of commodities to the poor. Not content with reaping a harvest of this kind, however, the toll-owner, when markets were held in the open streets, robbed the ratepayers in another way. After the cattle market or other market was held there was scavenging to be done at the cost of the ratepayers; the toll-owner escaped. He carried off his tolls in his pocket; there was nothing which could be rated; and the local ratepayers were left to pay for scavenging the streets. How many hundred such cases there were in England and Wales alone was shown by the Return, which was divided into three parts—(1) Municipal boroughs; (2) Improvement Acts and Local Government districts; (3) Rural sanitary districts. In Part 1, 255 Corporations made Returns; of these, in 223 cases, rights belong to Corporation; of these 223, 75 were farmed, and of the total 255, 125 were admittedly held in open street, whilst more were actually so held. In Part 2, 249 markets under local authorities were shown; of these, 161 belonged to private owners, and of the remaining 88, 17 were farmed; 145 of these admittedly held in the open street, the real number so held being far larger. In Part 3, 206 cases were stated, all in private hands, and mostly held in open street. In any reform of local government which might hereafter be introduced, he trusted that steps would be taken to prevent municipal authorities from farming tolls. The effect of such a remedy as he proposed would be to increase the wage of every wage-receiver without increasing the amount which his employer had to pay him. The value of the wage to the labourer must not be measured by its nominal amount. It was what it would procure of food and other necessaries of life. Cheapen the cost of food as this proposal would, and the value of the wage was augmented. Afford facilities for better food, and the standard of comfort was heightened. He trusted he would receive the support of the Government. There were cries outside for turning society upside down, because of real grievances pressing on the poor. He had never been a revolutionist in his life, so far as this country was concerned—he had always urged the redressal of wrongs by Parliamentary action; but a crisis was undoubtedly coming, and unless Parliament dealt with these outside clamours and showed that it intended to redress the wrongs which could be redressed, they could not complain if violent men should become prone to use violent language. He would conclude by moving the Resolution of which he had given Notice.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.), in rising to second the Motion, said, he hoped the Government would meet the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) half-way. Rumour went that this matter was to be dealt with in the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) which he had in the pigeon-holes of his Office; but he had not the information which would enable him to deal properly with the question. The House had not intuitive knowledge of the question, which was far too big to be included in one or two clauses of the Bill which the right hon. Gentleman had in view. He was desirous of pointing out to the House that under Acts of Edward I. and Henry VI. there were obligations imposed upon owners of markets which they would not like to see revived to-day—these having reference to the taking of outrageous and unreasonable tolls—and that lords of the manor were obliged, as stated in *Comyn's Digest*, to "witness the sale," which was not a duty they discharged nowadays. The rights granted in olden times were only given in respect of duties performed, and it was perfectly competent for the House to fix their conditions and limitations. He would call the attention of hon. Members to the Report of a Committee which gave valuable information as to the Returns of tolls and customs taken in seaports and markets in Ireland in 1826. That Committee reported that there were many exorbitant and unreasonable charges, which restricted the sale and distribution of commodities, and had a tendency to affect commerce and industry. The Committee recommended that the Court of King's Bench should have the right to determine whether the charges were legal or not, and that those who had rights of this kind should deliver the schedule to the Clerk of the Peace. No legislation succeeded; but in the year 1830 another Committee was appointed, which did not present a Report. There had been no mention of Metropolitan markets; and as a Metropolitan Member he felt very keenly on the subject, because there was no city or town in the Kingdom where there existed a grievance of such magnitude in regard to markets as there was in London. The hon. Member for Northampton had not asked for such a Return. He was generally tender to the privileges of the City of London, and perhaps he did not care to move for a Return by the only method—that of an Address to the Crown. If the Government did not see its way to grant a Commission, he (Mr. Lawson) should ask for a Return of the markets and market rights in the Metropolis in terms similar to those which his hon. Friend had adopted with regard to the municipal boroughs of the country. He complained that in the Return which had been presented to the House only in a few cases had owners given that information which they were required to do. That was not the case in small places only. In Sheffield, for instance, the Duke of Norfolk declined to state by what authority he levied his dues, the gross amount received, and the accommodation he gave for the terms received. But seldom in the case of these municipal boroughs, and hardly ever in the local government districts and rural sanitary districts, was it that the private owners had provided any sort of accommodation for trade in return for the dues they received. They seemed to think they had done their duty in taking their money, and they did not return one penny in the form of capital expenditure. Corporations were almost as bad in some cases. A particular case was that of Walsall, where not only did the Corporation not provide any accommodation, but farmed out the rights to an individual. In the Return presented to Parliament there were very few admissions that markets were held in the open street, for when a thoroughfare bulged a little from the parallel lines it was claimed as a market "place." He alluded to the open street markets in London, over which no one claimed any rights to levy tolls—Hampstead Road, Leather Lane, and the New Cut—and stated there was nothing like uniformity or equality in the levying of tolls throughout the country. It was chaos and confusion from beginning to end. Bath, which had a population of 53,700, had a revenue of £1,051; Exeter, with a population of 47,184, a revenue of £2,518; Cambridge, with a population of 47,150, a revenue of £965, with £522 more from the Corn Exchange; and Swansea, with a population of 50,000, a revenue of £4,000. Three of these towns were in agricultural districts, and the tax upon the people must be a sore incubus on the trade of the localities, and a heavy drag on the resources of the inhabitants. He would ask hon. Members to look into the nature of the powers enjoyed by the City under their charter. Outside the City there were only three markets to which any importance could be attached—Spitalfields, Covent Garden, and the Borough—and, as showing the revenues reaped by the City from their markets, he mentioned that the City Chamberlain's accounts in 1881 put down the gross receipts from the City markets as £150,000. In reference to them, there was the Report of the Commission of 1854, recommending that the charter of the City giving power over these markets should be revoked. He strongly urged the creation of new markets for greater London, on which demand there had been much cry from the platform and much talk in the Press. He maintained that the City Corporation had done everything in its power to obstruct the establishment of markets outside its own boundaries, and that it was impossible to say how much the action of the City Corporation had enhanced the price of food, limited its supply, and in some cases deteriorated its quality. In other capitals markets were in central places where food could be easily distributed to teeming populations, and why should London wait? He believed if a Royal Commission were appointed it would give greater facilities to the trade of the country, and increase the real means of living to the great masses of the people. In the Metropolitan Board of Works Money Bill of 1881 power was given to the Board to inquire into this matter, and to present Bills; but he believed the Board had never taken any advantage of the powers conferred upon them. He considered that the public representative authority should acquire and retain the rights which at present vested in private individuals under definite conditions for the public welfare. He referred to the virtual blocking up of a fine thoroughfare at Spitalfields in consequence of market rights claimed. The whole question showed how the rights of private and public persons came into collision, and furnished one more argument in proof of the necessity for appointing a Commission. Public markets should be the markets of the public.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire as to the extent to which market rights, and rights affecting places where markets are held, are in the hands (1) of public bodies, and (2) of private persons, or bodies of persons. To inquire generally how such rights are exercised, and particularly what accommodation is given in return for charges levied; in what ratio market tolls stand to the value of goods on which they are levied, and how far the regulation of markets by means of bye-laws or otherwise, market rents, stallages, and tolls, and tolls affecting market towns, are restrictive of trade. To report as to the advisability of compelling the transfer of all such rights to local authorities; of prohibiting the farming of tolls and stallages, of prohibiting the placing of restrictions on the sale of goods in a market that may be lawfully sold elsewhere, of providing by means of the incomes from markets or otherwise for the extinction of the capital account chargeable to such markets, and for declaring all markets to be free and open,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) said, the facts laid before them by the hon. Member for Northampton could not but make a deep impression. This was not a Party question, and if the hon. Member went to a Division he should vote with him. Hitherto in this country we had thought solely of production; but there was another important question coming up in connection with food supply, which was as important, and that was distribution. When trade was increasing by leaps and bounds we did not ask whether there were too many middlemen; but things were different now. The question of distribution was particularly important in regard to perishable food. There were now great growing populations in the Provinces to which the hon. Member had referred; but he wished particularly to deal with London. Taking the case of London, how did the markets stand as to vegetable? It was a strange fact that more than half of London was supplied by carts from the districts bordering round London. If they proposed to establish new markets connected with the railways the monopolists of the existing markets would bring their rights into play. He could not see that, under the Motion of the hon. Member, any injury would be done to the rights of property. There were many cases in which no property existed at all, and in which it would be found that rates and tolls were levied without any legal rights. But even where rights did exist it was fairly open to consideration whether the conditions on which the franchises were granted had been fulfilled, and whether the duties which attached to the property were being discharged. The Committee on the Spitalfields Market Bill had before them a gentleman who had made that question a special study —Mr. Stuart Moore—and he held that the holders of the charters were trustees for the public. If they failed in their trust, if they took too much toll, if they did not protect the public, the Crown could step in and the rights granted under a charter could be declared to be forfeited. It was necessary to see what the conditions and duties were in each case, and in many cases it would be found, he believed, that, although the rights had a legal existence, the conditions were not fulfilled. One of the purposes of the charters, undoubtedly, was to preserve and promote free competition; but in London the effect was to maintain "rings," which kept up the price of food. The franchises were granted in some cases for one day a-week; but the exclusive right was claimed for every day of the week. The original duties included generally the administration of justice and the maintenance of the police of the markets; but now these duties were performed at the public cost. Another duty was to keep the markets clean; but this was neglected, and scandalously so, at Covent Garden. When most of these charters were granted, the policy was to limit the expansion of London, the population of which was then very small; and the vast increase in the population had created an entirely different condition of things. With reference to Spitalfields Market, the hon. Member for West St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson) had been rather too severe on the City of London. During the inquiry by the Committee, he (Mr. Hanbury) was struck by the extreme fairness with which the Corporation had guarded its rights. Its sole object appeared to have been to preserve a free and open market. The market was in a crowded district, and under the charter, which was 200 years old, the owner claimed a right to prevent anyone starting a market for the wholesale disposal of vegetables within an area of 6 2-3 miles, and also to prevent an overflow market in any of the streets within that area. These rights the owner positively claimed to exercise up to this day. The Committee was asked to establish a market at a distance of three miles, and the owner of Spitalfields Market quoted the charter to prevent this being done, and if the new scheme had not been backed by wealthy supporters the additional market would not have been established. It had been decided by the House of Lords that the Spitalfields charter was valid as against the public, but not as against the City of London. It was doubtful what the market rights were—whether they extended to vegetables, or included fish. The owner was acting under two charters—one of Charles II., applying to two days a-week, and another of James II., applying to three days a-week; but the latter charter was found to be worthless. He believed it would be found that there were many charters of that kind. Here, then, was a charter for two days a-week, under which a monopoly was maintained on all days of the week. The owner admitted that he made differential charges as between one customer and another. He also claimed the right to prevent anyone setting up a rival market under the Common Law; and similar rights were set up in the Provinces. It would not by any means meet the necessities of the case if the Government were to say they would give to municipal corporations the power to purchase these rights, for there were many market towns without corporations, and with local authorities who should not be invested with these powers. He was not willing to grant monopolies to municipal corporations, and would rather see free trade in markets. He thought it would be to the interests of the owners of some of these market rights to have them thoroughly looked into by a Committee upstairs, so that definite principles might be laid down for the future as to the way in which these franchises should be dealt with. When the Islington Market Act was passed compensation was granted, but it was refused on the establishment of the Columbia Market by Lady Burdett-Coutts. Parliament granted that market in the face of the franchise, without compensation. In 1882 the Riverside Fish Market Bill was passed by the House of Lords and compensation was granted to the owners of the existing franchise; but when the Bill came down to the House of Commons compensation was refused on the ground that there was plenty of room in London for these markets. He contended that it would be very much in the interests of the owners of this class of property that this matter should be thoroughly gone into, so that they might have their rights put upon a well-established principle. He hoped the hon. Member for Northampton would not be satisfied with any concession by the Government which merely proposed to vest these rights in municipal corporations. Rather than that, he hoped he would go to a Division, so that the whole subject might be well threshed out, and that they might have some fixed principle laid down in reference to it. In the interests of property itself he hoped that the Government would have no hesitation in granting the Commission asked for.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) said, that it would not be necessary for him to detain the House at any length after the able speeches of the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) and the other hon. Members who had preceded him. He believed if all the hon. Members present were to rise in turn and express their opinions there would be only one opinion amongst them as to the importance of the question before the House. There was no question of more importance to the producer, as well as to the consumer, of this country than the question of distribution of the products of the country. There were towns and districts where the price of agricultural and garden produce was as high as it was simply because there were deficient means of distribution, and as we were likely to be more and more dependent on petty culture—certainly more than formerly—it was important that the produce should be brought within reach of the consumer with the greatest facility, and at as little cost as possible. He hoped, therefore, that his right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) would rise in his place and concede the Commission asked for by the hon. Member for Northampton. It need not be a large or an expensive Commission, but a Committee of the House would not be of much use, because they could not bring before a Committee the poor consumer or the poor producer, who were the real sufferers. When he (Mr. Mundella) was at the Board of Trade many cases of hardship in reference to these market tolls were brought before him. Was it not a striking thing that in the constituency which he represented, with a population of 300,000, the markets should be entirely in private hands? There was certainly this to be said for the Duke of Norfolk, that he did provide markets, but he declined to give a return of the authority under which he held his market rights, or of the gross receipts or other matters in which he thought they ought to have information. He knew there had been some negotiations for the purchase of his market rights, but the price offered was thought to be insufficient, and the result was that the markets for that great community of Sheffield were left in the hands of a private owner. He did not say that the Government were bound to accept the reference of the hon. Gentleman, or that they should adopt the exact words of his Motion; but there were many questions raised by the Motion that the Government must inquire into, such as "in what ratio market tolls stand to the value of goods on which they are levied." Then it was most important that the question should be considered as to how far such markets should be declared free and open. He contended that in the interests of the producer and the consumer the more the principle of free sale in all the markets of the country was extended the better it would be for the public. He had had cases brought before him at the Board of Trade, where tolls were levied on goods that had come no nearer a market than the railway station. That acted like the French *octroi* duty, as a deterrent to the bringing of produce to a place where this was possible. In conclusion, he would again express his earnest hope that the Government would grant the Royal Commission asked for.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, he entirely concurred in the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Mundella) as to the able and clear manner in which the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) had brought the matter before the House. In fact, the Government had no reason to take exception to the way in which the matter had been introduced. He also fully agreed that it was not a Party question. He conceived that any proposition which had for its object the cheapening of the food of the people, and especially that of the poorer portions, should not be regarded, and in no way should be dealt with, as more properly belonging to and to be settled by any one Party in that House. The Government desired to promote, by all just means, the free exchange of the commodities of the country. Notwithstanding the fact that almost all the markets in the municipal boroughs in England and Wales were in the hands of Corporations, hon. Gentlemen had complained that, even in that case, tolls were levied which were were not defensible, and which interfered very greatly with the free exchange of commodities. Whether that was so or not, one thing was certain—namely, that for ultimate action in this matter, they must look to local authorities; and the Government were of opinion that the solution of the question was to be brought about in that direction. The Government thought that these markets ought to be in the hands of popularly-elected Bodies, who would administer the trusts placed in their hands for the benefit of the community at large, and not for the benefit of individuals. He was bound to say that the Government believed that the hon. Gentleman had made out a *primâ facie* case for some inquiry; and if the Government could see their way to satisfy the requirements of the case by recommending the House to appoint a Committee they would prefer that course. But, after careful consideration, they thought that an adequate inquiry could not be made by means of a Committee; therefore the Government were prepared to assent to the Royal Commission. He was bound to say that there were some points in the Terms of Reference, which had not been so carefully scrutinized as it was essential they should be, where amendment was necessary; but the hon. Member might rest assured that if he took the action which the Government would recommend him to take, he would find no indisposition on their part to arrange such Terms of Reference as would meet all the requirements of the case. He would suggest that the Motion should be negatived; that the hon. Member should confer with him with the view of arranging some other Terms of Reference; and that the amended Terms, with the Motion, should be put upon the Notice Paper subsequently, and agreed to by the Government.

MR. BRADLAUGH said, he would accept the pledge of the Government, and he did so in the same spirit it had been given. Of course, the proposal would apply to the whole of the United Kingdom. He would consent to have the Motion negatived, subject to the arrangement as to Terms of Reference.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE—PUBLICATION OF DETAILS IN DIVORCE AND INDECENT CASES.

OBSERVATIONS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire), who had the following Notice on the Paper, which he was precluded by the forms of the House from moving:—

> "That this House deplores the evil done to public morals by the publication in the newspapers of the offensive details of divorce cases, and of others of an indecent character, and urges upon the Government the need of strengthening the law against the publication of obscene matter,"

said: The subject which I desire to bring before the House is one of a painful character, and nothing but a strong sense of public duty would have induced me to take this course; but I have been so deeply impressed by the injury done to public morals by the foul reports of divorce cases which have recently appeared in the public Press that I could not shirk this duty, and I must ask the indulgence of the House for a short time while I draw their attention to so distasteful a subject. I believe I may state with truth that a widespread feeling exists in this country that something must be done to check this evil, and that feeling is shared by the House, as is shown by the fact that fully 260 Members have responded to an appeal to take action in this matter. I may add that shortly before Parliament met a meeting of the magistracy of Liverpool was held, presided over by the Mayor, at which this resolution was carried *nem. con.*—

> "That this meeting of magistrates sitting at Liverpool, having been specially convened by the Mayor to consider the injury done to the public morals by the publication of detailed reports of divorce cases, is of opinion that it is desirable that the publication of such details should be forbidden by law, and that the same rule should apply to all cases of an indecent character."

Several meetings of a similar kind were held in other towns to the same effect; indeed, I may say that something like unanimity exists that a check should be put upon the license of a portion of the Press. It is only of late years that this evil has grown to such magnitude; formerly the Press used to prune these reports, so as to deprive them of prurient details; but, of late years, the habit of reporting at great length has suddenly developed, and some of the lower class of papers have even gone so far as to give verbatim reports of the foulest details of vice. The better class of journals for long resisted this vile practice; but, gradually, one could see the growth of the habit even among them, and if we go on at the rate we are doing there will soon be few exceptions to the rule. Last year was the worst for bad divorce cases for many years, and the evil done by the moral pestilence that emanated from our Divorce Court will never be fully known and measured. There were weeks together when the chief matter of the Press, and of private conversation, was the disgusting details of these infamous cases; a malarious fog brooded over the country, poisoning the moral atmosphere like the emanations from a pest-house.

But what I ask the House chiefly to consider is the effect upon the morals of the young. It is now impossible to keep the newspaper out of the hands of children and domestic servants; it is part of the daily life of the country. Is there a father in this House who would like his boys and girls to read these abominable cases? I believe there is hardly one who did not use his utmost endeavour to keep them out of their hands; but how vain is it nowadays to hide the newspaper. Our towns are full of revolting placards which thrust this odious knowledge upon everyone. I believe in but few cases can children be kept from this guilty knowledge, and it is impossible for them to get it without their minds being soiled. All moralists, even in heathen countries, have held that children should be kept innocent in mind as long as possible; but that is virtually impossible now, and probably there never was a time since the world began when children were so widely corrupted by familiarity with vice as in London in this 19th century of Christianity. I will read to the House a letter I have received from one who was formerly a successful head master of a great public school—I refer to Archdeacon Farrar. He writes—

> "I am very glad that you are endeavouring to secure some legal means of suppressing the publication of needless and demoralizing details in divorce cases. No wise man would wish to prevent the publicity which is an effective punishment of guilt; but the deterrent influence of publicity in cases of proved guilt can be perfectly secured without flooding the newspapers with the *minutiæ* of corrupting narratives. Even Tacitus, the historian of the worst epoch of the Roman Empire, lays down the rule—'*Ostendi debent scelera dum puniuntur, abscondi flagitia.*' As the head master of a great public school, I found it wholly impossible to limit the perusal of newspapers; and I am sure that every head master in England would tell you that the lengthy and long-continued reports of profligate conduct in the higher ranks of society are fruitful in evil influences upon the minds of the young. The careful supervision over the reading of the young, which is exercised in all Christian homes, is frequently rendered quite nugatory by the licentious matter with which they become familiarized when they are at school."

I believe this weighty opinion fairly represents that of all the heads of public schools in the country; and it applies almost as much to girls' schools; and I have been told of painful consequences from reading this literature in them. Then the vast number of children that run about our streets become perfectly familiar with every kind of vileness; indeed, I often wonder whether the children heathen lands are exposed to such contamination as that vast multitude of poor uncared-for children who run wild about the streets of our great cities.

And this leads me to say that, accompanying this abuse of the Newspaper Press, there has grown up a fearful amount of depraving literature in this country. A perfect flood of immoral books has come over here of late years from abroad; translations of the bestial novels of Zola, and others of a similar school, are now pouring into this country; and it is almost impossible to enforce the law against such works, while we allow matter equally corrupting to be published by the daily Press without let or hindrance. I fear there are too many tokens that this country is going backward, not forward, in the matter of morality; an insidious laxity is creeping over society; wickedness in high places is condoned in a way that would not have been possible in the earlier years of Her Majesty's Reign. In these matters the descent of a nation is terribly rapid; the severe morality of the Puritans was followed by the profligate times of Charles II., and it looks very much as if England was going through the same process again. I appeal to those who regard the religion and morality of a nation as its highest and noblest possession to do something to check the flood of impure literature which is poisoning the young. If nothing is done to stop it, I believe our course will be rapidly downward, and the end will be that of the great nations of antiquity who perished from their own vices.

I do not underrate the difficulties of this question. I am aware that this country regards publicity as the chief safeguard of justice, and that it values very highly the liberty of the Press. I do not propose that we should close the Courts of Law when divorce cases are tried. I am fully alive to the importance of branding vice by public exposure, and the Press should be allowed reasonable liberty of reporting; but surely there is some middle course between totally suppressing reports of divorce cases, as they now do in France, and publishing the most prurient details. It will be for the wisdom of this House to draw the line, and I feel sure that a large section of the British Press will rejoice to be freed from the competition of the lower class of papers, which live by pandering to the basest appetites of human nature.

I am prepared for the objection of some that we want to shield the wealthy and the great. Now, for my own part, I wish to say that instead of shielding them I would rather they were pilloried tenfold more; the conduct of some of the upper classes in this country would disgrace heathendom; they are jeopardizing the order to which they belong; and if many such exposures take place like those of last year the country may be brought to the verge of a social revolution. For my part, I would not move a finger to arrest the just indignation of the people from titled profligates; but I am not prepared to let the whole nation be poisoned by the reports of their debauchery. After all, it is more important to protect the morals of 36,000,000 people, of whom 6,000,000 are children at the most impressionable time of life, than to frighten a few hundred wealthy profligates. In this, as in other things, one has to consider the greatest good of the greatest number. No other nation, so far as I know, permits such extended details of divorce cases. In France it is altogether forbidden; and I doubt whether other European countries allow such latitude as we do.

Let the House further consider the injury done to our good name by the republication of these vile reports all over the world. Some of the worst of these cases were telegraphed to America, the Colonies, and India. They create the impression abroad that we are a most corrupt nation; they tarnish the good name of the country; they are taken too much as samples of average British morality. It is certainly not the way to keep the respect or the affection of the Colonies. But it is in India that the effect is worst. The Native papers there comment on these trials, and assume that their masters have little need to teach them a higher civilization. No one can tell how far they lower the *prestige* of this country; and, after all, we hold India more by *prestige* than by force. It is most humiliating for an Englishman abroad to have these odious cases cast up as a reproach upon his nation; he can but hang his head and blush as these hideous records are telegraphed and published week after week.

I think I am not mistaken in assuming that the House will generally agree with me thus far. It is when we come to the remedy for this, that immense difficulties are encountered. No doubt, the simplest method would be to hear all such cases *in camerâ*; but that method was rejected when the House established the Divorce Court, and it is not likely to alter its decision now. Then there is the plan of giving the Judges power to prevent the publication of what they consider unfit details of evidence. It is alleged that they possess this power theoretically; but it has practically become obsolete; certain it is that the Judges will not now incur the odium of punishing the Press through contempt of Court, unless under express Act of Parliament. I think I may venture to assert that we cannot look for a remedy to the voluntary action of the Judges. I think the view that will commend itself to the House is that we must strengthen the whole law about obscene publications, and prohibit offenders from pleading in defence that it is the report of a public trial. It is too important and difficult a matter to be dealt with by private Members; and I shall propose that the duty be laid on the Government, and I have good reason to believe that it will respond to the appeal. In conclusion, I would wish to quote from a circular, signed by some of the most illustrious names in England; a circular which exactly expresses our views, with the single exception that we seek to give legislative effect to them, believing that in no other way can they be made operative.

> "We, the undersigned, respectfully suggest to all those who have the control of the daily Press the desirability of some combined action by which they may minimize, if they cannot wholly suppress, the details of divorce cases and criminal trials, such as those which of late have occupied so many columns of the newspapers.
>
> "We are aware that the fear of publicity is one of the most powerful deterrents to the commission of crime, nor have we the least desire to shelter the misdeeds of offenders because of any position in society which they may occupy.
>
> "But we have a strong conviction that the necessary publicity could be secured without divulgence of details of a demoralizing character, and we have reason to fear that the full record of incidents in these cases ministers to a diseased appetite, and produces a most unwholesome effect on many minds.
>
> "We desire further to call attention to the inevitable evils which must result from thus familiarizing with vice the minds of tens of thousands of young persons of both sexes from whom, in these days, it is impossible to keep the daily newspapers.
>
> "We do not reflect for one moment on the motives of any who have considered it part of their duty to publish full reports of these trials, but we are sure that a combined effort to keep the pages of newspapers as free as possible from the stain of such impurities would be conducive to the public good."

This document was signed among others, by the Duke of Westminster, Lord Selborne, Archdeacon Farrar, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, the late Lord Iddesleigh, Professors Huxley and Tyndall, Cardinal Manning, and many others. No words of mine can add to the weight of this appeal. I leave it in the hands of the House, with the full belief that it will act rightly, and do what it can to stop one of the most deadly evils from which this country suffers. I conclude by drawing attention to the Resolution, of which I have given Notice, and which I trust the House will accept.

MR. EGERTON HUBBARD (Bucks, N.) said, if it had been moved he would have seconded the Motion with great pleasure, and thought that no Member of the House was better fitted than the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) to bring forward that important but delicate subject. It was not for the House to put upon newspaper proprietors, who were not only public servants, but rivals of each other in business, the duty of striking out of their journals matter which might affect their saleability; but he held that, in the interest alike of woman and children, who should be saved the knowledge of unnecessary details, and of public morality generally, and even for the sake of the Press itself, some restriction should be placed on the liberty of publishing the offensive details of divorce cases. It only required the action of the Lord Chancellor and the Government to provide that some proper legal restriction should, with that view, be put upon the Press, without involving the least danger that criminals, however rich or distinguished they were, would be shielded from public criticism, or from the proper consequences of their misdeeds.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.) said, he thought they were all sensible of the advantages of publicity in everything connected with the adminisiration of the law. But those advantages might be bought too dearly, and he had a strong impression that, in some instances, they were bought too dearly. In that matter it was necessary to make a choice of evils. It was an evil, no doubt, that a case should not be reported. On the other hand, were there not infinitely greater evils which attended the publication of the details of certain cases? The present practice was very anomalous, for in all the cases which might have been determined in the old Ecclesiastical Courts for dealing with matrimonial causes the Court might now order them to be heard *in camerâ*, where they could not, with due regard to decency, be heard in public. That power existed in certain cases if they could have been dealt with in the old Ecclesiastical Courts. Why should it not extend to other cases where the very same reasons for its exercise existed? There were certain cases in which it was desirable that nothing should be published beyond, it might be, the formal proceedings in the case, and the judgment of the Court. Of course, it was said by removing publicity they would lessen the punishment of the guilty parties. That might be so; but he was not prepared, in order to make the punishment more severe to one or two persons, to demoralize the whole country. He thought, in the interests of public morality, that the remedy which would prove most effectual, particularly in the interests of the young, would be that the presiding Judge should have the power in every case, whether in the Divorce or any other Court, if having regard to the nature of the offence he thought it expedient, to order that no report whatever of the evidence should be published. He did not believe that any remedy short of that would be effectual, while he would not approve of hearing all cases *in camerâ*. He would leave the Court open to the public; but the Judge should have power to say that the evidence should not be published at all. He was glad that the subject had been brought under the notice of the House, and he hoped that some course might be adopted to suppress what could not be otherwise regarded than as a great scandal, and that something effective would be done.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne) said, the feeling of the House seemed to be almost unanimous as to the evil; the only question was the remedy. In the interests of the newspapers themselves, it was desirable that a clear rule should be laid down; because it did seem hard upon respectable and ably conducted newspapers that they should be outbidden and undersold by less scrupulous rivals which gave full details of these indecent cases. He could not agree with the suggestion just made, because he believed it would be eminently distasteful and repugnant to the Judges; but if such a power rested in the Judges, it would not touch some of the worst cases, because it was not merely by the publication of evidence that harm had been done. One of the grossest and most scandalous outrages on the public was perpetrated by a newspaper which made comments in connection with a certain matter, and that was done under the pretence of reading a moral lecture; and it was now followed up by indecent stories, which were being published at that moment in one of the well-known evening newspapers. He thought that was a great outrage on public morality. It would be seen, therefore, that action confined to mere reports would not be effective. He had had an opportunity of speaking to several Judges on the subject, and he found that they differed as to their power in these matters. Some held that there was no privilege in publishing indecent reports, while others held that there was a clear privilege. Then, again, he found that some of them considered that they had no power whatever to regulate or forbid the publication of any matter which might occur in Court. Nor had they power to exclude any part of the public from Courts of Justice. However that might be, every decent man and every father of a family was deeply concerned in this matter, that early every morning their houses were not flooded with publications containing filthy and indecent remarks under the pretence of "news." He thought a very simple and short Act of Parliament might be passed, which would render punishable by imprisonment the publication of indecent or obscene matter, whether in the form of evidence given in a Court of Justice as anecdotes, or as sketches of pretended trials. The law as it stood at present was manifestly insufficient to cope with the evil. There was an unanimous feeling in the House that these indecent publications should in some way be stopped, and he thought that might best be done in the manner he suggested.

Mr. LOCKWOOD (York) said, he did not agree with his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Addison). In his opinion prevention was better than cure; but he could not approve of the course recommended by his hon. and learned Friend, because it would involve an inquiry into the whole of the details which had given offence. He hoped the hon. and learned Attorney General would accept the suggestion of his hon. and learned Friend (Mr. Finlay). He must say he dissented from the notion that the Judges ought not to take responsibility in this matter.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir Richard Webster) (Isle of Wight) said, he need hardly say that Her Majesty's Government were entirely in sympathy with the motives which had induced the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) to bring the Motion forward; and they agreed that some alteration, if possible, should be made either in the law, or in its practice, so as to put a stop to what was undoubtedly a monstrous abuse. At the same time, it was an exceedingly difficult question, and the course suggested by the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay) was well worthy of consideration. On the other hand, there were difficulties which must not be lost sight of when dealing with any question of this kind. He must differ a little from the law as laid down by his hon. and learned Friend behind him. The state of the law was that at present any report of a trial, which was in fact an indecent publication, was subject to the law as to indecent publications. It was decided many years ago in the case of "Steele *v.* Brannan" that it was no answer to a charge of indecent publication to say that it was a report of legal proceedings. This was only another branch of the law which was laid down in the case of *The Confessional Unmasked*—that, however good the motive was, and however necessary it was that certain practices should be called attention to, these were no defence for an obscene publication. He agreed with his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Addison), and with everything that had been said as to the monstrous character of the reports which had been published of certain trials within the last 12 months. At the same time, he thought that the conduct of one of the journals, to which attention had been called, in publishing, under the assumed pretence of doing good to public morality, most disgraceful details, a great many of which, if true at all, had been called into existence by the action of the proprietor of the journal itself, was as bad as anything could be; and, in his judgment, it would be a lasting stain on the career of that journal, whatever might be its future. He thought, after all, the responsibility ought to be made to rest, and must rest, upon the Press itself. It was well known to counsel that there occurred in the Divorce Court every day cases of which the details were disgusting, and of which he was thankful to say the Press took no notice whatever. There were, perhaps, half-a-dozen such cases every week in which the publication of the details would lead to an outcry; but he knew that, as a rule, they were not reported. It was an unfortunate circumstance that, when persons of high position, or of public position, or whose names were in any way before the public, misconducted themselves, and so came before the Court, the papers published the details of the cases. But he thought the first blame rested upon the Press. It could not be said that it was the course of justice that necessitated that step being taken by the Press; but he agreed it was one of those cases in which it was matter for consideration whether prevention was not better than cure. He agreed with his hon. and learned Friend the Member for York (Mr. Lockwood) that if responsibility, as was suggested, were to be undertaken by anyone, it would, perhaps, be better that it should be exercised by the Judges than by anyone else. At the same time, it was a step that must be taken with very great care, and after carefully considering the extent to which interference should go. It was well known that in cases of circumstantial evidence the publication of facts in the newspapers had often been the means of obtaining important additional evidence. Therefore, those who had considered the matter carefully thought that, if there were any interference with publicity, care should be taken that justice did not fail through publicity being denied in certain cases.

While admitting this, he equally agreed that a rule might be devised whereby the necessary publicity should be obtained without the publication of horrible and prurient details. It had been suggested as an alternative that these cases should be heard *in camerâ*. As a matter of fact, these could be heard *in camerâ* now. One of the Divorce Acts provided that all divorce cases should be heard in public, unless the Judge otherwise ordered. The matter had been under the consideration of the President of the Court, who felt that it would be a strong step to take to avail himself of the powers of hearing all the cases referred to *in camerâ*. It might be doubted whether public opinion was yet ripe for such a course to be taken. He could only hope that the conductors of the daily papers, recognizing the unanimous feeling on both sides of the House—which was concurred in by Her Majesty's Government—would feel that they had gone too far, and that, although they might have made a few hundred pounds by the extra sale of papers, it was money that was badly earned. He hoped this expression of opinion in the House of Commons would have the effect of checking the tendency to make money out of the publication of these sensational placards and disgusting reports. He could not say that the law as to indecent publications really required alteration. An offender could be proceeded against summarily under Lord Campbell's Act. The only reason why proceedings had not been taken, at any rate by those now in authority, was that there was the great evil that had just been named that if you took proceedings you again incurred the risk of flooding the papers with the details to which objection was taken. It was a very serious responsibility to advise any such prosecutions. Of course, proceedings could be taken by private individuals; but they ought to be undertaken only in flagrant cases. He trusted the result of the discussion would be that it would be less necessary in the future than in the past to think of taking any action; but if it were necessary, any practical proposal would have the fair and candid support of the Government. At the same time, he could not hold out the hope that at the present time the Government would be justified in saying it was in their power to take any steps for the alteration of the law. He hoped that any necessity for such action would be averted by the effect of this debate upon those concerned.

Mr. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) said, he felt disappointed that the right hon. Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) had not more clearly indicated the line the Government intended to take. There was a very strong feeling throughout the country on this subject. He was, however, rejoiced at the sympathetic feeling expressed on the question from both sides of the House. He thought the only way out of the difficulty was to prohibit the reporting of such cases. A report could be taken by a shorthand writer, which should be furnished to both parties; and, though portions of the evidence might leak out in some quarters, not half the mischief would be done as was the case under the existing system. If reports of divorce cases be withheld from newspapers until the cases were over, it would not be worth while to give details.

Mr. SHIRLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Doncaster) said, he did not think the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) quite appreciated the suggestion made by the hon. and learned Member for Inverness (Mr. Finlay). That suggestion was not that these cases should be heard *in camerâ*. When a case was heard *in camerâ*, the public were necessarily excluded from hearing the case. But the hon. and learned Member for Inverness desired that the public should be admitted to the hearing of these cases, whether they were divorce trials, cases of indecent assault, charges of rape, or whatever they might happen to be. He quite agreed with the proposal of the hon. and learned Gentleman, as he understood it, and he did not think there would be any practical difficulty in carrying it into effect. At the hearing of any case of the kind—divorce, or rape, or indecent assault—in London or at Assizes or Quarter Sessions, before the commencement of the proceedings, the Judge or Court might say—"This is a case in which the details are necessarily of an indecent character, and we shall, therefore, exclude the representatives of the Press altogether." If it were a case of some general interest, probably some person, connected with the Press or not, might supply some details to the newspapers; but in such a case the Judge or Court might have the power to summon before the Court the proprietors of such newspapers, and commit them for contempt of Court. Before sitting down, he desired to express his regret that the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General should have gone out of his way to make an attack upon *The Pall Mall Gazette.* The editor of that journal might have been mistaken in some parts of his conduct; but those who were best able to judge were agreed that his motives, at all events, were thoroughly pure and patriotic, which was a great deal more than could be said for the proprietors and editors of some of the other journals. He (Mr. Shirley) doubted whether the Government really appreciated the importance with which this subject was regarded by the general public outside the House. What they wanted was not, as the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General seemed to think, a mere profitless discussion, but such a change of the law, or such an enforcement of the existing law, as would in future altogether prevent the publication of the disgusting details of indecent cases.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT — POLITICAL MEETINGS IN SCHOOLROOMS.

OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden), who had on the Paper the following Notice of Motion which, by the Rules of the House, he was unable to move:—

> "That this House is of opinion that steps should be at once taken to secure to Parliamentary Candidates the right of holding political meetings on convenient occasions, in all such rooms as belong to schools in receipt of Parliamentary Grants,"

said, that the object he had in view was to give the rural voters in county constituencies who had now such great power in their hands the opportunity of hearing both sides of the question at Parliamentary Elections. He did not propose that political meetings should be held in schoolrooms when there were other places available for the purpose; but there were villages, hamlets, and out-of-the-way places where the greater number of rural electors resided, and where there was no place of any description in which people could meet. In his own Division there were 80 villages, and in only five of them was there a place in which you could possibly hold a meeting. The majority of his constituents were agricultural labourers not having more than 12*s.* a-week, and it was impossible for them to go into towns as the richer electors could do to hear the candidates. He knew of a case in which an agricultural labourer walked seven or eight miles, after a hard day's work, in order to attend a political meeting. It was a great hardship that rural constituents should be put to so much inconvenience when schoolrooms receiving a Parliamentary grant were standing empty. If they refused to lend the schools in villages, the rural elector was denied the opportunity of listening to the political views of the candidate. He would also point out that the refusal for the granting of these schools was principally in the hands of the adherents of one political Party. He had no intention of making any attack on the clergy; but they could not shut their eyes to the fact that one of the lessons of the Election of 1885 was that the rural clergyman had got completely out of touch with his parishioners. In support of this view, he would refer hon. Members to a letter written to *The Times* on December 10, 1885, by the Bishop of Chichester, who thought that the result of the county poll ought to teach the lesson that the agricultural labourer justly resented his virtual degradation in the Church which was his own. It was, however, to this class that they practically left the regulation of the schools, and it was they who had the power of saying whether they should be used or not. Sometimes when the use of these schools was granted, the concession was surrounded with harassing conditions to the Liberal candidate. In many instances the schools were granted in a very one-sided fashion. They were granted to the Tory candidate, and utterly denied to the Liberal candidate. As an illustration of the harassing conditions under which the use of schools was permitted, it was a fact that when the question of Disestablishment arose towards the end of the Election of 1885, clergyman laid it down as a condition that the Liberal candidate should not say a word on Disestablishment, although the Tory candidate had been there before him and had spoken on that subject. He had taken the trouble to glean some information from his hon. Friends in regard to the refusal of the schools. In the Election of 1885 he found that out of 30 counties there had been an absolute refusal of these schools to the Liberal candidate in 24 of them. It might be said, however, that there were alternatives to the use of these schools. Political meetings might be held out-of-doors, in barns, tents, or in chapels. No doubt, this was true; but he reminded those who urged this view that Elections did not always occur in convenient seasons of the year, and that it was not always convenient to farmers to lend the use of their barns. Besides, there was not a large number of farmers who professed the Liberal faith, and when they saw the use of a school in receipt of Government aid refused to the Liberal candidate, they were not likely to be so generous as to offer the use of their barns to their political opponents. It was inconvenient to travel about a county constituency with a large tent, and many persons entertained religious scruples regarding the use of a chapel for secular purposes. They were, therefore, forced to recognize the necessity of using these schools for political meetings, and he held that the State, having granted money in support of these schools, had a right to devote these buildings to any useful purpose it chose. The principal precedent on which he based his case was the 6th section of the Ballot Act, which embodied the principles he had just expressed. He contended that the right of the State by that clause to demand the use of schoolrooms in receipt of Parliamentary grants for polling stations was founded upon the fact that the schools were supported by the money of the taxpayer. There must be some sort of appeal or arbitration when questions arose in regard to the use of the schoolrooms for these purposes. He did not wish the Committee of Privy Council on Education to be the arbitrators in those cases; but as the matter was a purely local one, he should be inclined to put the responsibility on the Local Authorities, to which it was proposed to confide powers connected with the provision of allotments for labourers and other functions. It might be said that the schools ought to be employed for educational purposes only. But he contended that the State, which contributed towards their support, was entitled to insist that they should be used for any other purpose beneficial to the neighbourhood in which they were situated. On the other hand, he asked to what greater educational use could the schools be put than being made to subserve the political education of the newly-enfranchised agricultural labourers? He maintained that it would be unwise and imprudent to place any hindrance in the way of the masses acquiring the instruction which would enable them to form an accurate judgment on the political questions of the day.

Mr. JAMES ELLIS (Leicestershire, Bosworth) said, he felt bound to express his approval of, and join in, the recommendation of the hon. Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex (Mr. H. Gardner). Representing a large County Division he (Mr. J. Ellis) could confirm what his hon. Friend had said as to the great inconvenience arising from the refusal of the village schoolroom as a place in which to hold Liberal political meetings. On the other hand, he knew of many cases in which the use of the school was allowed to both political Parties, and where the clergyman of the parish very wisely took the chair alike at Liberal and Conservative meetings, conducing thereby very largely to the orderly character of the meetings; and, though in most cases his political opinions were Conservative, he lost nothing by taking the position. In considering the Education Question, many thought the compromise made by Mr. Forster was made too much in the interest of the Church; but they were willing, for the sake of the education of the people, to subscribe to the schools. In his business connection, he (Mr. J. Ellis) subscribed to five village schools, and was, though a Nonconformist, on the managing committee of two of them. Acting thus, with many others, for the common good, he could not but feel the unfairness of using the school for the convenience of one political section only. In many cases the only choice lay between holding the meeting in the school or in the large clubroom of the public-house, and to hold a meeting at a public-house was extremely undesirable. He did not believe for a moment there would be any harm in adopting the Resolution. He should like to see all schools which received a Government grant made the recognized meeting place for the villagers when they wished to assemble for any reasonable purpose. He would not have the room given up for entertainments; but it should be a recognized thing that the committee should allow the use of the school as a village hall, instead of compelling the villagers to have recourse to the clubroom of the public-house. He trusted the House would accept the view of his hon. Friend, and he could not believe that anyone would wish that only one side should have the advantage of putting its view forward in the rural districts, nor did he think the Conservative cause would gain by the use of the power by its paritzans of denying the Liberal candidate a hearing.

BARON DIMSDALE (Herts, Hitchin) said, so far as he knew the schoolhouses were never refused to him or to his opponents. He believed there was no real difficulty; but he was not prepared to interfere with the discretion of the local managers, nor did he accept the principle that schools provided out of the rates for educational purposes could be demanded for any purpose that was required. If they granted that, the privilege would not long be confined to Parliamentary Elections, and it would probably lead to endless difficulty.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said, his constituency extended 20 miles each way, and on one occasion he proposed to hold a meeting in a village at the extreme point of his Division. The landlord, who bears a name well known and respected in this House, owned the whole village, including the school-house, and he declined to give the use of the school unless he received a guarantee that nothing should be said touching the Disestablishment of the Church of England. He (Sir John Swinburne) declined to give such a guarantee; he was refused the use of the school-house, and he was never able to hold a meeting in that neighbourhood. He could not see why this privilege of using the schools should be denied to either side.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) said, he unstood that the object of the Motion before the House was to exclude political distinctions as regards the use of the schools. He thought it would be generally admitted that the managers of schools which received grants from the State should give the same advantage to one political Party as they might have given to another. He could not imagine that hon. Members on the other side would object to that view. As to the danger of any disturbance occurring, he thought that objection had been thoroughly met by the argument that inasmuch as the school had been already granted with safety to one political Party there would be no danger if it were used by the other political Party. There was also a further argument against this objection, and that was that if any damage were done to the school a guarantee should be given that the damage should be made good. But if he quite endorsed, from the political point of view, the Resolution moved by his hon. Friend the Member for the Saffron Walden Division of Essex (Mr. H. Gardner), on the other hand, from an educational point of view, he must allow that he felt some difficulty. The Resolution, as it stood, would go so far as to require all managers, including all the school boards, whether in urban or rural districts, to allow the use of their schools for political meetings. Now, it was a literal fact that just in proportion as the buildings were well adapted for school purposes, and furnished to that end, just in that degree were they ill-adapted for public meetings. Take, for instance, the buildings of the School Board for London. If this Resolution were to pass, the buildings of the School Board for London, which were for the most part divided into class rooms, could be utilized for the holding of political meetings. In some of these schools there were central halls, and buildings of this character had been found eminently adapted for public meetings. But, on the other hand, there were schools without central halls, and where that was the case the buildings would not be suitable for political discussions. A large meeting in such buildings would be very inconvenient. He confessed, also, there was some difficulty in supporting the Resolution precisely as it stood, because, whether the school was suitable for political meetings or not, the Resolution would compel its use. It had been argued that a discretion should be allowed in the granting of the school. But he contended that if the school was to be used for political meetings at all it should be given to one side as well as the other. Any objection against giving a school to the Liberal Party should also be valid against the Conservative Party. There should be fair play to both sides; and so far as that was sought by the Mover of the Resolution he (Mr. Picton) would be prepared to join his hon. Friend in the Division Lobby.

Viscount CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen) said, he thought that managers of schools were ill-advised if they refused the use of their schools to both political Parties, and did not treat both equally alike. He had little doubt what the effect of their doing so would be. The school grant did not give a right to control the use of buildings, many of which had been built and were largely supported by private funds. If political meetings were to be regarded as educational, Inspectors would have to attend them to judge of their character. He had been present at many meetings which could not be properly described as having anything educational about them. He knew a village hall which had a licence for dancing and entertainments; it had been built by one political Party for political objects; and was it to be said that because it received a licence from the State it was therefore to be available for all political meetings? He could not admit that educational grants gave the State the right to interfere with anything but the efficient conduct of the school receiving them. There would be an insurmountable difficulty to the working of the Resolution in the appointment of a body to decide what meetings ought to be allowed in a schoolroom. Meetings could not be limited to election times; indeed, political education was carried on between elections rather than at election times, when speakers were apt to indulge in exaggerations which did not promote political education. How was it to be determined what were or were not political meetings? He looked forward to the time when the Primrose League would be able to demand the use of any public elementary school in the country for holding a concert three times a-week for the purposes of political education. [*Laughter.*] Well, there was a Ladies' Liberal League, which had signalized itself in a marked manner last night; and was it to be allowed to have a concert three times a-week in all the Church schools? He had attended a large number of meetings, which were partly concerts and partly political meetings, and he did not know whether one political speech constituted a political meeting or not. The position was a sound one that managers must have the entire discretion as to the use that was to be made of school buildings.

Mr. QUILTER (Suffolk, S.) said, that, during his candidature in Suffolk, he had had to stand hours in the rain because of the refusal of schoolrooms for his meetings. At a village in the centre of the property of the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) the schoolroom had been with difficulty hired from the school board; but the local clergyman refused them the use of the oil lamps, so that they were left in darkness. In another case, a letter was addressed by a clergyman to his opponent, beseeching him to visit a benighted district, and offering him the use of the schoolroom; but when he (Mr. Quilter) applied to the same clergyman for the use of the schoolroom, he received a peremptory refusal, accompanied by the expression of an opinion that the schoolroom should not be used for any Party purposes whatever. Both Parties were not treated with the equality recommended by the noble Viscount opposite (Viscount Cranborne), and in many districts schoolrooms were the only rooms in which meetings could be held.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE (Worcester, Evesham) said, it was most inexpedient that the London School Board should be compelled to grant the use of its schoolrooms for political meetings. He said this, as he believed, in agreement with what had fallen from the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton). He submitted that voluntary schools were not made public property because they received money from the Government under the system of payment by results. These school buildings had been built with private money, and were maintained by private resources. The disposal of them should be arranged by the founders, their heirs, assigns, or representatives. Those who were left in charge of the buildings might fairly be trusted to exercise their judgment and discretion as to whether public meetings should be held therein or not. But he earnestly deprecated any compulsion being applied to them, which would certainly be distressful and unpopular. It would be unwise to discourage them by such means, because upon their care, vigilance and sympathetic supervision, the success of these institutions depended.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, he thought it would be very undesirable to allow schools to become the centres of political work at elections. As an educationalist, he was not in favour of schools being used in any sort of way in connection with politics.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, that the question of the relationship of these schools to the State was settled by the statement of his hon. Friend (Mr. H. Gardner), that Parliament had set them aside during election times for the purposes of the Ballot. What was the fact with regard to public meetings? In every nine cases out of ten these so-called national schools were used for Conservative purposes, and refused to the opposite Party. In towns like Bradford, a Division of which he represented, the school board gave the greatest facilities to all political Parties, and simply made a small charge to cover the expenses involved in allowing the schools to be used for meetings; and now that there had been an extension of the suffrage, there was a new reason why they should insist upon the use of national schoolrooms by all Parties. In the country districts, however, the case was different. In some rural constituencies there were no public rooms except the schools, and the candidate and electors were sometimes forced to meet in the cold outside, on account of the dog-in-the-manger policy of managers. In half the parishes of this country the schools were not available except to one political Party. The land belonged to a comparatively few gentlemen, and they had it in their power to prevent the erection of buildings. Therefore, it was all the more necessary that the schools should be available. He thought his hon. Friend had done the community good service by bringing forward this matter. He (Mr. Illingworth) contended that every school which received a State grant should be equally available to all Parties. The schools were national schools, and that they should not, therefore, be set apart for the use of only one of the political Parties of the State.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) said, that, speaking for a large agricultural Division, he begged to give his hearty support to his hon. Friend. It could not be disputed that political meetings in small country parishes were of great educational value, as they led people to discuss public matters.

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir William Hart Dyke) (Kent, Dartford) said, that this could be only regarded as an academic discussion, as no Division could be taken on the question. It had been discovered by hon. Members opposite that they were under special disadvantages as regarded meetings in rural districts. He frankly and freely admitted that that was not a circumstance at which he rejoiced. In politics, as in other things, fair play was a jewel, and he did not defend those who allowed the school rooms under their control to be used by one Party, and denied the use of them to another Party. What he objected to in the Resolution, however, was the extreme vagueness of its wording. He thought there were excellent reasons for that vagueness, because the more closely you went into the matter the more dangerous did it appear to make compulsory the granting of schoolrooms for the purpose. The Education Department had interfered very little in this question, except so far as to indicate that schools, at all events, should be neutral ground with regard to politics. Board schools were the property of the ratepayers, and with respect to them the Education Department said it did not rest with the Department to determine for what purposes other than education School Boards might allow the schools to be used; and if any ratepayer objected to what was done, his objection was to be decided by a Court of Law. Voluntary schools, on the other hand, were essentially, and to a great extent, private property; and, therefore, the Education Department did not indicate to the managers what their wishes might be. He had said that the wording of the Resolution was vague. What was the definition of a "Parliamentary candidate?" [An hon. Member: See the Ballot Act.] An hon. Gentleman said it was defined in the

Ballot Act. But it was well known that when the Corrupt Practices Act was under discussion, a lawyer of great acumen, the Attorney General of the day, having been challenged again and again as to when, as far as the Penal Clauses of the Act were concerned, a candidature began, could not answer the question; nor was any other legal mind able to answer it. If it was impossible to say when a candidature began, what the hon. Gentleman (Mr. H. Gardner) proposed would lead to all manner of disputes. Nothing could be more unjust to managers than to make those schools the arena of constant Party strife and conflict. Again, how were they to define what "a political meeting" was? A meeting to advocate temperance principles, or a meeting of the Salvation Army, might drift into a political meeting. Then, what on earth was "a convenient occasion?" That would be defined in one way by the candidate, and in another by the school manager. His hon. Friend said that it could be decided by the Local Authority, or by arbitration. It would come, then, to this—that if any lecturer or chance passer-by chose to call himself a candidate, it would be in his power to throw the district into all kinds of strife. The majority of the House would hardly be prepared to accept proposals of that kind. He was sure it was the wish of all Parties that political elections should be conducted as peacefully as possible, and he therefore objected to the Resolution on this ground, if on no other, that it would foment and encourage Party strife. The hon. Gentleman indicated that because Parliamentary grants were given, therefore the buildings were *pro tanto*, to the amount of the grant, public property. He disputed that proposition *poto cælo*. If the hon. Member looked carefully at the discussion which took place on the Ballot Act, he would find that no indication was given by Mr. Forster at that time, that polling at elections should take place in those schools on account of these grants. Parliament, at that time, viewed with extreme jealousy any extension of the use of the schools which could injure the educational purpose for which they were designed. In this connection, he read the 17th clause of the Ballot Act in regard to schools in Ireland, and maintained that the proposal to compulsorily grant the use of voluntary schools for election purposes throughout the year would be inflicting a hardship on the owners of private buildings, many of which stood within private grounds. Therefore, he thought that the proposal in every respect would be a hazardous one and harmful not only to the cause of education, but to the peace and good order of the neighbourhood, and unjust as regarded schools which might be called private buildings.

Sir UGHTRED KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe) said, that the House would agree with the right hon. Gentleman in his commendation of the moderation with which his hon. Friend the Member for North Essex (Mr. Gardner) had brought this subject forward. He had made out his case. In many places, the refusal of the schoolroom for the purposes of a meeting prevented the holding of the meeting unless in the open air. If a room was available and suitable for a meeting of one political Party, surely it ought to be equally available and suitable for the opposite Party. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir William Hart-Dyke) had contended that the hon. Member (Mr. H. Gardner) was not justified in arguing that the fact that schools received grants from the State was a reason why they should be used for public purposes. But Mr. Forster had used words in the House to the effect that it was no more than fair that buildings which were in receipt of grants and supported by the school pence of the locality should be used for certain public purposes for which they might be required. The right hon. Gentleman gave the go-by to the point that these schools were used under the Ballot Act. All they asked was, that the same principle should be recognized in other election purposes. He called attention to the fact that the original proposition of Mr. Forster in 1871, when he first brought in the Ballot Bill, was that it should rest with the managers to say whether or not the school should be used. It was owing to the action of a Member of the present Cabinet, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) that the clause was made compulsory. The House of Lords in 1872 struck the words out; and when the Bill came back Mr. Forster proposed to agree with the Lords' Amendment. The right hon. Member for West Bristol, however, protested against that, and succeeded in re-inserting the words. He doubted whether the right hon. Gentleman opposite was, in principle, greatly opposed to the proposal of his hon. Friend; and if a Bill were brought in to carry it into effect, provisions could easily be framed for meeting the objections of detail which had been raised. The right hon. Gentleman had laid down the doctrine that the voluntary schools were private property; but he would hardly be prepared, he (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) thought, to press that doctrine to extreme lengths, particularly after the passing of the Ballot Act. Again, there would be no great practical difficulty in defining who was a candidate. No doubt, if the proposal was adopted, it would be necessary to restrict the use of the school room to *bonâ fide* public meetings, and not to let it extend to committee meetings. Again, the schoolroom should not be used on evenings when the evening school usually met. And, further, the proposal might be limited to Parliamentary Elections. In towns, where other halls were available for meetings, it would not be necessary to do more than require that if a school were used at all for political meetings, it should open to both sides. When the use of the schoolrooms for the meetings of one side did not interfere with education, surely it was only fair and reasonable that they should be equally available for the meetings of the other side. He would not advocate the proposal if he thought that this use of schools would interfere with their educational usefulness. But believing that such facilities for meetings would promote political education, he should have been glad, if his hon. Friend had been able to go to a Division, to vote with him.

Mr. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid) said, that he would like to say a few words upon this subject of using elementary schools for public or Party gatherings. It had been argued by hon. Gentlemen opposite that the public had a right to the use of schools receiving grants for the purpose of holding political meetings, and it was denied that there was any right of private property in such schools. He objected to that view of the matter altogether. There were three distinct categories of schools. The Board Schools, which were public or ratepayers property; the Church schools, which belonged to the Established Church, which was in a very true sense nationalized three centuries ago; but the schools of the Roman Catholics and other Nonconformist Bodies were really their own private property. He knew, from his own knowledge, that the Roman Catholic schools in his district were owned by his own family, and were, in fact, part of their private property. In the same way, the Roman Catholics generally, the Wesleyans, and the Baptist Nonconformists were the owners, the private owners, of their own elementary schools; and therefore they did not stand on the same ground as other schools referred to by the hon. Gentleman who had brought the subject before the House. He (Mr. De Lisle) admitted that the case was somewhat different in regard to the schools of the Established Church, which took up a middle position between the ratepayers' schools and voluntary schools, properly so called. Indeed, those schools were claimed as national property, though there were voluntary Church schools that were, in reality, private property. The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth) stated that the managers of denominational schools accepted grants and school fees, and thereby gave up their private rights in their schools. He (Mr. De Lisle) took quite a different view. The Parliamentary grants were made in order that the schools might be kept up to a certain standard of efficiency; and so long as the schools were kept efficient, and did all that the Government Inspectors expected them to do in return for the Parliamentary grant, he maintained that the State had no ground to claim further rights against private property in elementary schools beyond the efficiency stipulated for. Therefore he agreed with his noble Friend (Viscount Cranborne), that the ground set up by hon. Gentlemen opposite was meretricious, because it ignored the rights of property. After long struggles and trying times, the voluntary schools had been got into a state of prosperity, and it would be hard to expect the Nonconformists to give up their rights in such schools. He, for one, should oppose such a proposal as that brought before the House by the hon. Member. The rights of independent bodies, strictly so-called, were ignored in the present Resolution; and he thanked his right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Education Department (Sir William Hart-Dyke) for the able way in which he had defended the rights of the voluntary schools.

ENGLAND — BOYCOTTING AND INTIMIDATION.—OBSERVATIONS.

Mr. NEWNES (Cambridge, E., Newmarket): Mr. Speaker, as the Government have brought in a measure dealing with Boycotting and intimidation in Ireland, this is a fitting occasion to call attention to the prevalence of these two evils in England. When I asked the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) the other evening, whether he intended to take any steps to put down these evils he said he was not aware that they existed in England at all. If he were in his place to-night, I could assure him that there is scarcely a County Member sitting upon this side of the House who could not give to him instances, almost without number, of Boycotting and intimidation in the rural districts of this country. It is true it is carried on here differently from what it is in Ireland. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Yes; it is carried on in Ireland openly, and in a declared manner; it is carried on in England, secretly and underhand. [" Hear, hear!"] I may inform hon. Gentlemen opposite who cheer that the effects of Boycotting and intimidation in this country are none the less illegal, none the less immoral, and none the less disastrous to the victims than they are in Ireland. It seems, Sir, as though the art of intimidation in the rural districts of England has, by dint of long practice, been brought to the level of a science. In Ireland, it is clumsily done; it is like the act, easily detected, of a man driven to desperation to commit a crime; but, in England, it is like the adroit, the skilful and secret crime of a practised criminal. [An hon. Member: Bosh!]

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. NEWNES: When I put a Question the other evening on this subject to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, I had ample evidence of the existence of this village tyranny; but since the Question and the answer of the right hon. Gentleman were made public, I have received what I must describe as shoals of letters from all parts of the country pointing out that Boycotting and intimidation exist. It is done in four manners, and is invariably used for the purpose of carrying into effect the political convictions of hon. Gentlemen who sit on the opposite Benches. The first way in which it is done is to threaten the labouring people with a reduction of wages; the second way, is to threaten loss of employment; the third way, is, in case of shopkeepers, to threaten loss of custom; and the fourth way is to threaten loss of charity at Christmas and other seasons of the year. [*Laughter.*] Yes; I will give the evidence, first of all, of a gentleman who has a large practice in the centre of an agricultural district in England. This is what he writes to me, and I am willing to show the letters I have received to any Member of Her Majesty's Government who may desire to see them—

> "Boycotting and intimidation is most extensively prevalent in the rural districts of this and neighbouring counties. I say this of my own knowledge, and I have very good authority for saying that the same practices exist throughout the entire district. If an inquiry were made, I am sure an abundant evidence could be produced of the truth of what I am stating. As to Boycotting, I consider it a very serious evil in the rural districts. The village grocers are, in the great majority of cases, Liberal, but since the county franchise was carried they have been severely Boycotted by the local clergymen and landlords and farmers. In some cases, the supplying of blankets, &c., for the local clothing club has been taken away from the village shopkeepers, which is a very great hardship indeed."

The report goes on to say—

> "That in many parts there are Liberal voters who dare not avow themselves Liberals, and that many men are threatened with loss of employment."

[*Cries of* " Where?"] Everywhere! I am not speaking now of individual instances. What I have read represents the state of things right throughout the rural districts of England. [*Renewed cries of* " Where?"] I have already said "Everywhere in the rural districts." Farmers let it be understood by their men that if they vote Liberal they will not be kept on at work through the winter. [" Where?"] I will give you the evidence. I cannot show the letters that I have, for the simple reason that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) refused to show the letters he had received—for the reason that the letters are in most cases from the poor victims who have been ground down by this relentless tyranny.

> "In one case a farmer was charged with intimidation. The evidence was perfectly clear and conclusive, but the jury would not convict."

I wonder whether the Chief Secretary for Ireland will recommend that we should change the venue to Dublin. The Voters' Protection Society, formed some time ago, examined into a large number of cases of the very kind I am describing to the House. Though they had 44 good cases, most of them of a very clear character, they only brought five of them before the magistrates; but out of the five cases brought forward, they were only able to obtain punishment in one case. The evidence was ample enough in the other cases; and in the case in which they did obtain punishment, the magistrates censured the accused for having come to an arrangement by which he had to pay a fine. And this is what is added to the report—

> "Could this case have been tried without any political or class prejudice a conviction would, in the opinion of all who heard it, have been assured."

Now, Sir, I will read an account of something which has taken place in a village in Somersetshire, and which, I believe, has been published in some of the newspapers—

> "The working men voted for the Liberal candidate. Since then the most persistent efforts have been made to break up the working men's club, and because the members would not elect the squire's nominee as secretary, they have been turned out of their premises."

Another report says that—

> "Many Liberals dare not attend meetings in their own villages, but walk five or six miles to Liberal meetings in another village, where there is no chance of their masters seeing them."

This is the evidence given by the editor of an influential paper—

> "We will undertake to maintain that for every landlord or agent who suffers by the combination of the tenants and inhabitants of Ireland, there are at least 100 poor people in England who endure cruel hardships from the relentless tyranny of their masters and landlords."

Now, Sir, many of the charges that have reached me have been brought against members of a society which takes its name from a very favourite flower. It is sad to think that the beautiful primrose, which grows in our woods and hedgerows—an emblem of purity and innocence—is fast becoming a synonym of all that is underhand and oppressive. In conjunction with the modern Tory, it cannot be said—

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

It is a great deal more than that. It is a name under which to cajole, and, if that fails, to threaten and to punish. It is a name under which to use pernicious, tyrannical, illegal, and immoral political pressure. We have no objection to the Tories' Habitations and their ruling counsellors, and the rest of their flummery. If they find that the policy embodied in the Tory programme is not sufficiently attractive in itself, there can be no objection to their adding a farce to the play-bill; but, Sir, that farce is rapidly becoming a licence under which to break the law. The flagrant way in which the ladies of the Primrose League broke the law during the recent political contest was most amusing. In some cases, probably, they did not know the extent of their wrong-doing; but in other cases it seemed as though they were put up to fight the battle of the Tory Party against the provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act, on the ground that their supposed ignorance of its provisions would excuse them. There has been a great gallantry on the part of the Liberal Party with regard to these ladies; but it is quite certain that if the lady members of the Primrose League had been proceeded against under the Corrupt Practices Act, many of them would now be working out sentences of imprisonment. Although there has been great forbearance in the past, there is, I contend, a very angry feeling springing up which will, in course of time, recoil not only on the dames of the Primrose League, but on the Conservative Party. I will only give one or two instances of the way in which the dames of the Primrose League do their political work. Here is one letter I have received—

> "On going past a dairyman's I saw Liberal bills displayed. On passing again, later in the day, I saw the bills had been removed, although portions still adhered. I asked why they had been removed. He said that shortly after he put them up he was waited on by a member of the Primrose League, who was a customer of his, and told that unless he took the Bills down within two hours he need not call again with his milk."

That is not to be taken merely for what

in itself it is worth; but it is to be taken as representing the action of the dames of the Primrose League throughout the entire country. Here is another letter—

> "Will you be good enough, in consequence of the system of Boycotting and intimidation practised by the Tories on Liberal tradesmen, to withhold my name as I am one of the victims."

Well, Sir, large numbers of the poor people in the rural districts are honest and earnest men, strong in their political convictions, but they have been driven in many cases, for the sake of themselves and their families, to sacrifice their political freedom. Some surprise has been expressed at the difference between the Liberal vote in the counties at the Election in 1885 and at that in 1886. That difference has been attributed to the unpopularity of Home Rule; but I assure the House that a large amount of it was due not to the people in the agricultural districts being unwilling to give the Irish people the management of their own affairs, not to an unwillingness on their part to support the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), but to the fact that between the two Elections the people had to pass through a long and a hard winter, during which they were subjected to an amount of paltry tyranny and oppression which was a disgrace to the Tory Party and a scandal to the country. When the franchise was extended to the rural districts it was intended that the poor man should give his vote as freely as the rich man; but it seems to be the opinion of many employers of labour in rural districts that when they buy a man's labour they also buy his vote, and if he refuse to give it to them it is an act of impertinence and insubordination. Well, Sir, I have brought this question before the House in order that these practices may be exposed, in order that public opinion may be brought to condemn them, and in order that persons may know that if they use their positions for the purpose of trampling upon the political freedom of England they are guilty of an act which every honest man will treat with disgust and contempt.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am not surprised, Sir, that hon. Members on the other side of the House should receive with cheers and laughter, and other well-known signs of incredulity, the strange but true facts that have been placed before the House by my hon. Friend the Member for the Newmarket Division of Cambridge (Mr. Newnes). The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), in his sublime ignorance of everything that tells against his own side, assured us the other day that he knew nothing of these practices. Well, perhaps that might arise from the fact that the right hon. Gentleman represents the Strand, and not a County Division. We, who do represent County Divisions, do know something of the tyranny—[*Laughter.*] I do not know what there is to laugh at. I represent a County Division, and I have suffered from the effects of this tyranny and intimidation, and I have long wanted an opportunity of placing some of these facts before the House. I am glad that such an opportunity is afforded me this evening. I can conceive no better occasion when a matter of this sort should be brought before the attention of the House of Commons than the eve of the great struggle—which I suppose will commence next week—on the question of putting down Boycotting in Ireland. It is not for us now to argue the question whether Boycotting can be put down by legislation or not; I am content to rely upon the opinion expressed by the Leader of the Tory Party. But I do say that, considering the evidence we have of what is going on to-day in England, it will be a scandalous thing if, when you are bringing in a most drastic measure to put down Boycotting in Ireland, you refuse to take notice of what is being done at your own doors by Members of your own Party. Boycotting in this country is an engine of oppression. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) stated the other day it was used in wantonness in this country. It is a weapon of oppression in this country used by the powerful and the rich, and the people who call themselves religious persons, and autocratic squires, for the purpose of crushing down, and ruining, and driving into starvation and misery the poor creatures dependent upon them; and that is an infinitely greater crime in the opinion of every honest man, I am sure, than the Boycotting in Ireland, which is used not out of wantonness, not for the purpose of oppression, but in self-defence, for the purpose of defending those who have been suffering from a great tyranny at the hands of their landlords for generations past. That is the distinction between Boycotting in this country and Boycotting in Ireland. Here it is a fashionable expedient for carrying Primrose Knights into Parliament; in Ireland it is the expedient of men driven to desperation by misery and ruin which the rack-renting landlords have brought upon them. Now, I can give one or two instances which have come under my own notice—and I am perfectly willing to show the letters and documents relating to these matters to anyone who desires to see them. I have received letters, and not a few of them—just as the hon. Member who introduced this Motion has received—referring to and describing the miserable tactics resorted to by gentlemanly Tories, who are not too proud to sail into power and place by means of the votes they have extorted from poor people. One letter which I received the other day was from an agricultural labourer in the County of Kent, and I am willing, as I have already said, to show that letter to any hon. Gentleman. The letter was sent to me simply in order to bring to my attention what the humble writer no doubt thought was a grievance in connection with the administration of the school in his own parish, and yet he had to wind up his letter—

> "I dare not give you my name, because if it should transpire I should be turned out of my employment immediately."

I have a letter from a gentleman resident at Bournemouth, where I attended a public meeting not long ago. My informant tells me I am perfectly at liberty to mention the facts, which are simply these—that he has been turned out of a public office, of which he has been in the enjoyment for a number of years, simply and avowedly because he happened to be a Liberal instead of a Tory. Again, I have received information of a case of another unfortunate man. This is certainly not a case of a political complexion; but it is not impertinent to the question, because it shows how miserably dependent upon their employers many thousands of honest working men are. A working man at Bedminster, Somersetshire, was not only turned out of employment, because he was summoned to give evidence in connection with a colliery accident, but he was practically Boycotted throughout the county in which he sought his livelihood. Word was passed round the ring of employers that this man should not be employed at any of the collieries.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): May I ask the hon. Gentleman to give me the name of the man? I will communicate with the hon. Member privately. I have reason to believe I know the circumstances of the case, and I think I shall be able to satisfy the hon. Gentleman in regard to it.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I will speak to the hon. Gentleman about the case subsequently. I shall be happy to show him the letter I have received. It is the letter which I used the other day in my own constituency; I read a portion of it, and, so far as I am aware, there is nothing to conceal about it. Now, I may refer to a case, which was mentioned to me the other evening, at Sunningdale, in Berkshire. I am bound to say, however, that the only evidence which has come to me is the combined testimony of a large number of persons at a public meeting—I do not state the facts of my own absolute knowledge. But I will mention the names, because my view is that it is only by holding up to the unpopularity which public opinion can bring to bear on these people that you can cause them to desist from indulging in this detestable system of tyranny and oppression. I am told that Captain Walter, of Wokingham, who, I fancy, is connected with the Mr. Walter who has a large interest in *The Times* newspaper, Boycotted a tradesman at Wokingham, and deliberately went, or sent, about requesting or persuading others not to have any dealings with this tradesman simply because he was on the Liberal instead of on the Tory side. I give the statement as it was given to me and corroborated at a public meeting at which I was speaking a few nights ago. In regard to tradesmen, I wish every tradesman who is Boycotted would adopt the course I have urged my own constituents to follow, and which I urge every tradesman who is Boycotted to follow—the advice I give to a tradesman is, that whether he is Boycotted by Mrs. So-and-so or Lady This or the Duchess of That, no matter how high in degree the tyrants are, he should place a large placard over his shop or place of business stating—"I am Boycotted by Mr. or Mrs. So-and-so, because I have the courage of my opinions, and am a Radical." I believe that if the people had the sense to do that, and expose, as it were, in the pillory of the opinion of every passer-by the contemptible meanness of the aristocratic swells who resorted to these dodges—dodges which make one's blood tingle with indignation—I believe we should very soon find that Boycotting would come to an end. Now, with respect to another form of Boycotting mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for the Newmarket Division of Cambridge—namely, Boycotting in connection with charities—I could give instances occurring in my own constituency. I have no doubt that my hon. Friend, and many other hon. Gentlemen, could give instances of assistance at Christmas time in the way of doles, or of blankets and soup, and the various other necessaries which are distributed to the poor at that season of the year, being denied by squires, and even by parsons, to some of the usual recipients, simply and solely because they have had the courage to vote for either the Radical or the Liberal candidate. The other day I attended a meeting with Mr. Whiteley, a gentleman who contested the Ashford Division of Kent at the General Election in 1885. I am sorry the hon. Member for that Division (Mr. Pomfret) is not present, because I think he would be able to throw some light on the subject. Now, I am assured by Mr. Whiteley that Boycotting was rife in every part of the Ashford Division, and was pursued to an extraordinary and cruel extent. The hon. Gentleman who introduced this subject mentioned the Voters' Protection Committee, which took up some of the cases which occurred in the Election of 1885; and he mentioned that only five cases had been brought before the Courts, and that out of these five in only one had a conviction been obtained. He gave the true reason why no conviction could be obtained. You cannot get magistrates, who, in this country are supposed to be above all these petty considerations, to do their duty. You cannot get them to behave more honestly in this country than they are sometimes said to do in Ireland, and you cannot get juries in this country to respect their oaths when the juries are composed of farmers and employers, and a charge is brought against one of themselves. I make that charge deliberately, and it is capable of proof. You are so shocked with the demoralization of the jury system in Ireland, that, forsooth, you must do away with it altogether, and bring Irish prisoners over here to be tried; but I maintain you had better look to what is happening in your own neighbourhoods. It would be as well to pluck the beam out of your own eye before you try to extract the mote out of the Irish eye. If it is necessary to bring Irish prisoners over here to secure a fair trial, I certainly think it is necessary to send our poor, unfortunate agricultural labourers out of this country if they are to meet with anything like justice when their cases are brought to the front. But I was pointing out to the House that only five cases were brought to the test of trial out of some 44 mentioned by my hon. Friend. The reason of this was the same which we have heard so much of on the other side of the House in respect to those cases which, we are told, cannot be made amenable to the law in Ireland. You cannot get evidence. The poor people over here are so intimidated that they dare not come forward to give evidence. It is not the Moonlighter here, it is not the Nationalist, but it is the parson, and the squire, and the Primrose Dame, these noble lords and ladies, these people who are supposed to be the advisers, the instructors, and the friends of the poor, who are guilty of the detestable system of Boycotting and intimidation. There is not only intimidation, but there is corruption as well. I will not, however, trouble the House with any specimens of the corruption which takes place, I will reserve them for some other occasion. Sir, it is not only, as we know, because people happen unfortunately to hold Radical or Liberal opinions that they are Boycotted; but it does frequently happen that people are Boycotted in this country on account of their religious persuasion. It is a notorious fact that the most noble the Marquess of Salisbury himself Boycotted the Dissenters of Hatfield, and prevented them getting a convenient spot on which to build a chapel. That is only one instance I can give you more instances of the tyranny practised upon the Dissenters. In my own constituency the hardest terms have been exacted when they have wanted a bit of land on which to build a chapel. It is perfectly true, as the hon. Member for the Newmarket Division has stated, that Liberals in country districts dare not attend meetings in their own neighbourhoods. If they want to listen to Liberals they have frequently to go miles away. In Berkshire I was told of many instances of this kind, and also of instances were men refrained from exercising their rights of citizenship from fear of being found out, and of being dismissed from their employment. Another case in the same district came under my notice of the peculiar tactics employed by the Primrose dames; these ladies who are so anxious to see their husbands Members of the House of Commons could not let poor agricultural labourers alone even on Sunday; could not leave them to eat their Sunday's dinner undisturbed; but must, between the Divine Services in the morning and afternoon, when they knew they would catch the labouring men and their families at dinner, go to their houses and solicit their votes. Now, I think, if they had no respect for men, at any rate, they might have some little respect for the Sabbath. ["Hear, hear!"] I am glad hon. Members opposite agree with me, and I only ask them when they attend their own meetings of the Primrose Habitations to enforce the lesson which they believe in here upon those with whom they consort out of doors. These are not the only specimens of tyranny of the same kind. There has been a vast amount of tyranny in connection with this Jubilee business. Hon. Members may not think so, but many pennies have been wrung from the poor people under threats of coercion. [*Cries of* "Where?"] Well, I have letters which I shall be happy to show any Member who likes to see them. I have a letter from an unfortunate seaman complaining—[*Cries of* "Read!" *and* Mr. T. P. O'Connor: Give us a Committee of Inquiry.] I have letters from soldiers and sailors, and when I brought this matter before the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), they, of course, were able to give very emphatic denials to the statements. [*Cheers.*] Yes, we all know the value of official denials. The noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman have always been able to assume a great air of incredulity concerning these things, and it is not easy for an hon. Member to bring out all the evidence he possesses in the form of a question to Ministers. I support the appeal of my hon. Friend the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor). Give us a Committee of Inquiry into these allegations; give us a Royal Commission, and we will give you evidence; and I challenge hon. Members opposite—I challenge every upright and honourable Englishman—and I believe some of the Tories are upright and honourable—I challenge Members of Her Majesty's Government, if they believe in their case, if they believe that our complaints are unfounded, to meet the charge like men, and be willing to have the matter sifted to the bottom. What do we find? Detestable charges have been brought against hon. Members sitting here, and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) has had the bad taste to suggest that the indictments and depositions used in prosecutions long since disposed of either by their having been withdrawn or by the acquittal of the prisoners, should be worked up and published as a Parliamentary Paper, and the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House (Mr. W. H. Smith) is quite willing to assent to such an infamous piece of partizanship as that. If you are so anxious to probe that matter to the bottom, if you are so willing to go to any expense in the endeavour to bolster up the detestable charges which have been made against the Irish Members, why should you not be prepared to accept our challenge, and to agree to an inquiry into the specific charges which we have brought against yourselves? [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Yes, I have given specific instances, and my hon. Friend has also given specific instances, and we say that if you believe that you are perfectly safe against charges of this kind you have nothing to fear. If you believe that what we assert does not exist, if you are not afraid to meet the charges, then let us have a searching inquiry to show how utterly prejudiced we on this side of the House are to believe these old wives' tales which every post brings to us from one part of the country or another. We shall see whether Her Majesty's Government will accept the challenge. All I can say is that I am not afraid of the test of inquiry by a Committee or a Commission; we can bring evidence to prove what we have stated, and we have no reason to fear the result. Then there is one other case of intimidation which is, I believe, a direct infringement of the Acts relating to Parliamentary Elections, and that is—and here, again, I have evidence of the fact which I state—that on many occasions, on some occasions, at any rate, in the last Election you had Tories going to the polling booths and distinctly informing the ignorant voters that the Ballot was not secret, and that, however they voted their employers would know how they voted. This occurred in my own district. [*Cries of* "Name!"] I am prepared to give the names of the persons if Her Majesty's Government will give me a Committee before whom I can bring the facts.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Allow me to point out that the hon. Gentleman has the remedy in his own hands. What he states is distinctly illegal.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am aware it is distinctly illegal. I am aware that Members of the Tory Party are frequently guilty of illegal acts, and I have already explained the reason why we cannot bring things home, and that is because of the tyranny and intimidation which has existed and which is equal to what you allege is existing in Ireland. We maintain that in every County of England the intimidation is such as to prevent the unfortunate victims of Tory oppression giving evidence. We have taken up 44 cases, and we have only been able to bring five cases to the test of a trial, and out of these five cases we could only get a conviction in one. [*Cheers.*] Well, you should wait before you cheer, and know what was the evidence placed before the tribunals. I did not know that this Motion was likely to come on to-night or I should have taken care to have in my pockets documents which I could have quoted to the House. I will add that I did not intend to refer to these matters on this occasion, because I had intended, and I had hoped, to have had an opportunity of mentioning these things in connection with the Coercion Bill when it next comes on. Now, Sir, I have, at any rate, made a strong case. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Oh, I do not for one moment suppose that what we have said has had the slightest impression on the minds of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I do not think it would be worth while to try and make any impression upon them, but I am glad we have had this opportunity of placing it on record that we have evidence of malpractices which the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stepney Division of the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Isaacson) admits to be illegal, and that we have challenged you to receive the evidence which we pledge ourselves to place before a suitable tribunal, such as a Select Committee of this House. I say again, and I say before the whole country—and I hope we shall be able to reach the country—I say that, if you do not choose to accept the challenge which we have given to you, if you do not choose to clear yourselves of the charges which we bring against you as Members of the Tory Party and as Members of the Primrose League, I have not the slightest doubt as to what the verdict of the country will be, and that if we are driven to the necessity of doing it, I do not despair of being able to form such an Anti-Boycotting Association as will make very short work of the Primrose League.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Mr. Speaker, I must confess it is a matter of surprise to me that no Member of the Tory Party, and especially no Member of the Government, has thought it right to get up to answer the speeches that have been made upon this subject. I am the more surprised at this conduct on the part of the Tory Party in view of the canons of political criticism which the Leaders of that Party have recently laid down. Very serious charges have been made against the Tory Party—[*Laughter*]—very grave charges have been made against the Tory Party, and the modern canon of Tory political criticism is, that when a charge is made, it is not for the accuser to substantiate the charge, but for the accused to prove its falsehood. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not accept that canon of political criticism, but I think the Tory Party ought to be logical and consistent. If they think that the mere statement of a charge necessitates a defence, I want to know why they have skulked and remained silent to-night while grave charges of intimidation and Boycotting and illegality have been brought against them by hon. Members of this House? I may say I was astonished at the attitude of hon. Gentlemen opposite—astonished and edified. They began by trying to drown the charges with shouts of derision, and then, when the charges became grave and serious, they became silent and ashamed. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, I correct the expression—partly silent and partially ashamed, which is about as far as I can expect Members of the Tory Party to go. Now, I have had the opportunity of going up and down the country, and of hearing a good deal about Boycotting. I said, in the course of a debate last Session, that there was more Boycotting in one county in England by the Primrose League than there is in all the 32 counties of Ireland put together. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] That is a statement of the truth of which I am firmly convinced. It is a statement which you doubt. Well, bring my statement and your doubt to the test of investigation by a Committee of this House. It is all nonsense for you to shout denial of these charges across the floor of the House. You are afraid of investigation. The country will judge that you have allowed judgment to go against you by default, because you have no answer to the charges, of the truth of which you are convinced. Now, Mr. Speaker, this intimidation takes very many forms. The artizan is Boycotted. The agricultural labourer is Boycotted. The shopkeeper is Boycotted. The Dissenting clergyman is Boycotted. During the Election of 1866 there were several counties in this country in which the agricultural voters were canvassed by the squire and his agent. I see an hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for South Northants (Sir Rainald Knightley), who, I was told, canvassed some of the labourers in his constituency—some of the labourers in his own employ—and I maintain that the canvassing of a labourer by his squire is simply a euphemistic term for intimidation. In other constituencies labourers were kept by their employers in the fields until after 8 o'clock on the day of election in order that they could not have an opportunity of recording their votes. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Am I not to mention these facts? I am intimately acquainted with them. I am ready to prove, if the Government have the courage to bring these charges to the test of examination, another form of Boycotting as regards artizans. I have been told of cases where colliers have been dismissed from their employment because they were supposed to be Liberals, and then when they have gone from colliery to colliery to find work they have been refused it, and all because the word "Boycott them" had been sent round by a Tory employer. Why, in some constituencies in this country where there are large numbers of workmen under Tory employers, Liberal candidates and their friends are earnestly begged not to come near the streets in which the labourers live, lest the labourers should be suspected of an intention to vote Liberal, and should thus run the risk of being Boycotted. I know of several cases of this kind. In one constituency I drove up to the door of a poor voter. I went into the first room in the house I came to. I could not find the man there, and, with that freedom which people allow themselves at election times, I searched the house through, but could not find him. When the election was over I got a letter from him, in which he told me he heard a car driving up, that he had voted for justice to Ireland, but that he was afraid when he heard the car driving up the street that one of his employers was coming to visit him, and that because he did not want to be betrayed either into a lie or into a statement which might endanger his employment, he left the house by the back door. These are things going on all over England; going on wherever an election takes place, and the hon. Gentlemen opposite know that this is so as well as I do. There is the Boycotting of Dissenting clergymen. I have here a letter received by a Member of this House. This hon. Gentleman bought a certain estate, and thereupon a member of the Primitive Methodist Body wrote to him, asking him if he would allow a Methodist chapel and school to be erected on the estate. Why was this letter written? Because the gentleman who formerly owned the estate was a

Tory who refused the people the privilege of erecting a place in which they might worship God as they liked. And as my hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) stated, the fact is undeniable—it has been published the world over—that the present Prime Minister (The Marquess of Salisbury) has over and over again, in the narrowest and meanest spirit of intolerance, refused to allow the Dissenters of his district to have any land on which to build a place of worship. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] You say "No!" Will you allow us to bring the matter before a Committee of this House? Well, then there is another form of intolerance—there is Boycotting in the shape of bribery, and this is mainly carried on by clergymen of the Established Church. How does this Boycotting take place? There are in every parish certain poor and dependent persons, and charitable people, many of them Tories, many of them members of the Church of England, get up subscriptions for the purpose of relieving these poor and dependent persons. Tory clergymen are often intrusted with the disbursement of these subscriptions; and does not everybody know that the amount of charity to poor voters is altogether dependent upon whether they vote Tory? [*Cries of* "No, no!"] I have been told on high authority that denials across the floor of the House of Commons are not disproof. I know this statement to be true. Well, Sir, I am asked for cases. My hon. Friend the Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall has mentioned the case of Captain Walter, of Wokingham. I will give another case. A friend of mine stood as a Liberal Home Ruler for a constituency at the last Election. His father was a shopkeeper, and a man who had kept accounts with him for 30 years closed them because he happened to take up the cry of Home Rule and Justice to Ireland. Well, now, there is another form of Boycotting—Boycotting by refusal of the use of halls and schools for meetings. That subject has already been dealt with, and I will not refer to it further. I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) is not in his place, because I wish to point out that one of the most important Boycotting institutions in this country are the bookstalls of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Sons. I have often said in this House that I would take an opportunity of calling attention to the monopoly thus enjoyed on the railways of this country by that firm. I hold that as railways are monopolies, sanctioned by the Legislature, we have a right of control over all their proceedings, over all their contracts, and even their bookstalls, and I say that if that question is ever raised in this House I shall be able to prove that the firm of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury Boycotts all the Liberal literature of this country. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen cry "No, no!" They will excuse me if I say I know a little more about literature than they do. It has been my unfortunate lot to contribute a little to literature, and I happen to know a little about the subject. I repeat my statement that the firm of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury Boycotts all the Liberal literature of this country, whether it takes the shape of newspapers, periodicals, or books; and, on the other hand, it advertises, promulgates, encourages in every form it can, the Tory literature of this country.

Mr. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): Allow me to say that I purchased a copy of *The Pall Mall Gazette* to-day at one of the bookstalls.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I cannot congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his interruption. His interruptions usually help his opponents, and are damaging to his own case. I hope his perusal of the solitary copy of *The Pall Mall Gazette* is the beginning of that process of enlightenment of which he has been largely in need. It is no part of my case against W. H. Smith and Sons that they do not allow a single copy of Liberal papers to be sold upon their bookstalls. My case is this—that they push Tory literature in every form they can; and I think those who are acquainted with the sale of literature know how much the trade is responsible for its success or failure. If hon. Gentlemen had to make their living by literature they would know a little more about the subject, and would not be so bland in their treatment of the question. I say that Liberal literature is, so far as possible, suppressed and Boycotted on

Smith's bookstalls, and Tory literature pushed in every way. If you go down to the bookstalls now you find that the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury is not ashamed to allow to be exposed, and to be sold as largely as possible on his bookstalls, a fac-simile of a letter which an hon. Member of this House has declared publicly to be a vile forgery. Have we not come to a pretty pass in British politics when political opponents endeavour in every way they can to promulgate and sell in face of statements in this House fac-similes of letters which are forged! We have given a challenge to the Government and to the Party opposite. Will they accept it? Will they consent to a Select Committee, or to a Royal Commission, or to any form of public inquiry by which our charges can be brought to the test of investigation? There is silence on those Benches; hon. Gentlemen opposite are too discreet. Now, Sir, there is Boycotting of colliers, shopkeepers, and labourers. In several constituencies in which I have addressed meetings during the last six months, I have asked this question publicly—"Is it true of your constituency, as of others, that shopkeepers have been told that if they vote Liberal their business will be withdrawn?" And cries of affirmation have come from all parts of the room. Are these statements not true? [*Cries of* "Yes!"] Then, will you not submit them to the test of inquiry, supposing these statements to be true? And hon. Gentlemen opposite know that they are true. I ask, is there no necessity for a clause like this, that any person may be prosecuted before a Court of Summary Jurisdiction "who shall take part in any criminal conspiracy to compel or induce any person not to deal with, work for, or hire any person or persons in the ordinary course of trade, business, or occupation?" Why, Sir, in every county of England, in almost every constituency of England, there are members of the Tory Party and Primrose League who are endeavouring to induce persons not to deal with, or to work for, or to hire certain persons in the ordinary course of trade, business, or occupation, because these persons have had the courage of their political opinions. Is there no necessity in this country for a clause against dangerous associations? I maintain that the Primrose League is one vast, strictly organized, and highly developed system of Boycotting. Hon. Gentlemen are mistaken if they think they are going to get rid of this question by laughing it out of court. We shall recur to this question, we shall bring it before the notice of the country, we shall press it home against the Party opposite; and I am sure that by whatever cajolery and the use of the noble art of political profligacy the Party opposite may endeavour to maintain their position, the people of this country will eventually take strong action against the efforts to prevent men exercising those rights of citizenship which have been given to them by Parliament.

Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): The hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) has preferred several charges of intimidation and Boycotting against Members of the Conservative Party. He mentioned one case the facts of which I think I know very well. It was a case where some miners lost their employment for a time owing to their taking part in an inquiry following an accident. All but one of these men have now returned to their employment, and are in full work, some at the pit in question, and others at another place. The hon. Member for Camborne has not been able to give me the name of the employer, but I think he is a gentleman I know. He is a most generous and kind-hearted man; he has taken all the men who applied back into employment; he is a Liberal in politics, and I have every reason to believe voted against me in the 1885 Election.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I only referred to one man who had been discharged because he had given evidence at an inquiry relating to an accident. I did not know the employer was a Liberal, though if I had it would have made no difference. I was only showing what intimidation is practised in the country.

Mr. LLEWELLYN: I am not aware that the men were refused employment. I certainly know that those who live in my Division were taken back into employment immediately they applied to be so.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I wish to intervene, for a few moments, in this debate, which is one of great importance, and one to which I hope the House will be willing to listen.

Quite sure I am of this, that having given the labouring classes the franchise it is our duty to protect them in the exercise of it. The Ballot Act was passed with that object, and anything like intimidation, or anything like a threat to influence people by unrighteous means, is a violation of the principle of the Ballot Act. In that we all agree. I have spent a long life amongst the working classes of this country, and I am here to say that the amount of intimidation, the number of threats to turn men out of work, in order to prevent them exercising their privileges of citizenship in a right way, is such that it is time for this House to take notice of it. Hon. Gentlemen opposite will not get rid of this question by attempting to laugh it out of court. We are determined to bring the matter before the country, and to bring it forward in such a way as to prevent a recurrence of these improper practices. My hon. Friends have not overstated the gravity of these evils. I know cases of farmers who have not been allowed to retain possession of their farms because they are Liberals. I know Nonconformists who have been prevented erecting places of worship by Tory squires. My hon. Friend the Member for the Newmarket Division of Cambridge (Mr. Newnes) has done great service to the country by bringing this question before the House. I did not expect that the debate on this subject would have been reached to-night, or I should have taken the trouble to have brought specific cases, which I can cite by the dozen, of intimidation. But sufficient cases have already been cited to cause the House of Commons to take action. I have been watching this evening to see whether hon. Gentlemen who wax eloquent in reference to the evils of Boycotting in Ireland will do so in reference to the same evil in England. The great principles of right have no geographical boundaries. What is wrong in Ireland is wrong in England; and I am persuaded that while there is one case of Boycotting in Ireland, there are 10 or 20 in England. The time has come when this matter must be dealt with. We have given the masses of the country the franchise, and they must be protected in its exercise. I hope the Tory Party will consent to a Committee of Inquiry. If they will, I pledge myself to bring forward such cases as will make the Committee feel that we have not brought the matter up too soon.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I have not the slightest wish to prolong this debate; but, in last winter's Session, I had myself a Motion on the Paper on the subject of intimidation in English counties. The case has been stated with great force by my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, though his remarks have been received with derision by hon. Members opposite. We have been repeatedly challenged during this debate to produce specific instances. It is not difficult to produce a great many instances to show that undue influence has been exercised, and that the provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act have been virtually set at naught. It may be familiar to Ministers and to hon. Gentlemen opposite, that, when the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James)—who now co-operates with them politically, and whose advice they ought to be ready to take — introduced his first Bill dealing with corrupt practices in 1882, he felt so strongly the danger of cases of undue influence being dealt with unfairly by benches of magistrates, that he proposed that cases of this kind should be referred to the Superior Court. This proposal, we ought to remember, was made before the franchise was extended to the humbler classes in the counties. Well, Sir, as we have been challenged to produce specific instances, I think I am justified in mentioning a case which occurred in the county I have the honour to represent; it shows very clearly how cases of undue influence are dealt with when they come before magistrates. Now, in South Northamptonshire three men were distinctly threatened with being turned out of their employment if they voted for the Liberal candidate. After the Election, it was supposed that these men had voted for the Liberal candidate, and they were turned out of their employment. The Committee to which reference has been made, the Committee for the Protection of Voters, took up the case, and it was brought before the magistrates. Now, what occurred with regard to that case? The very day before the case was brought before the Bench there was a great Conservative banquet, and at that banquet there were present—I believe I am correct in saying—three of the magistrates who sat on the Bench the next day to try the case. There was also present at the banquet the agent or representative of the owner of the farm from which the men were turned away, and there was also present the clerk to the magistrates. The case was brought before the Bench and dismissed, although eight credible witnesses, including the three men turned out of employment, swore that the intimidation alleged had been practised. Owing to the action of the Committee for the Protection of Voters, the case was brought before the Grand Jury of the county. It is notorious—it has been stated over and over again in the Press, and one or other of the Tory Members for Northamptonshire will contradict me if I am wrong—the noble Lord the Member for North Northamptonshire is, I am glad to say, in his place, and can point out if these statements are not correct—it has been stated that the evidence of the witnesses was given in the same form before the Grand Jury, and was unshaken by the cross-examination to which the men were subjected; and yet the case was dismissed by the Grand Jury, in the same way that it was dismissed by the magistrates—namely, by a strict Party vote.

Mr. KING (Hull, Central,): Mr. Speaker, I beg to call your attention to the fact that there are not 40 Members present.

House counted; and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. CHANNING resumed: I am glad, Sir, that the attempt to Boycott this debate has not succeeded. Now, Mr. Speaker, with regard to my own Division of Northamptonshire, I was credibly informed that at the first Election at which I was a candidate—the Election of 1885—one firm, who employ a large number of men, required their men to pass through the office before the day of election, and that each man was warned not to vote for me. Whether they did or not, I suppose my majority of upwards of 2,000 votes gives some indication. Then, Sir, I may mention a distinct case of threatening in another county Division, and it seemed to me, when I heard the facts from the people who were subject to the threat, to be a case which certainly came very nearly, if not quite, within the provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act. The man was a rate collector, who was a Liberal and had the courage of his convictions, and had put Liberal bills in his windows. The Conservative candidate for the Division, who was a landowner within that Division, and a magistrate for the county, paid him a visit, and drew attention to the exhibition of the bills. To this man he, being a magistrate for the county, said —"I will throw difficulties in the way of your being appointed rate collector again." Perhaps I may refer to a case of what may be called local government intimidation, which was placed in my hands only a few days ago. A quarrel occurred in a parish of Northamptonshire between the vicar and the schoolmaster. Into the merits of the quarrel I do not care to enter. But I may mention that, some time ago, the schoolmaster received a present from some of the children in the school. When it became known in the village that he was to be dismissed, a Memorial in favour of his retention was signed by 89 householders, amongst whom were the parents of 100 of the 114 children in attendance at the school. At the meeting of the managers, before whom this Memorial was brought by some of the friends of the schoolmaster, they positively refused to have it read, and, by a majority of one, they dismissed the schoolmaster. Into the merits of the dismissal I do not enter at all; but I wish to draw the attention of the House, as we have been challenged to give specific instances, to what has followed on the dismissal of the schoolmaster. As I have stated, a large number of the householders in the parish expressed their approval of the schoolmaster, and wished him to be retained. The decision having been arrived at, there was a general expression of opinion that it would be better for the parish to have a school board. I may quote from a letter which has been placed in my hands. It states that it was thought better that a school board should be formed for the parish, and several landlords threatened their tenants that, should a school board be formed, their rents would be raised, and that threat seems to have forced some of the parishioners to keep silence, contrary to their conscientious convictions. In one case, a landlord went to one of his tenants and said, "John, I understand there is"—[*Laughter.*] I do not think this is a laughing matter.

I do not consider that attempting to deprive humble men of their means of livelihood is a matter which should evoke laughter from anybody on the other side of the House. At any rate, this is what the landlord said—"John, I understand there is to be a meeting for the purpose of getting a school board. I have come to tell you that, if you vote for the adoption of a school board, I shall give you notice to leave your house." [*Interruption.*]

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. Gentleman has used an expression that he knows to be out of Order. [Several hon. MEMBERS: Who?]

MR. CHANNING: Two-thirds of the cottagers have already received notice to quit or pay higher rent, and most of these are Liberals. Well, Sir, we have been challenged to produce specific instances, and, I venture to say, I have laid one or two before the House. I will only add this one further point, that I was recently in Dorsetshire, a county which is peculiarly subject to landlord influences, and I was there informed by credible witnesses that the labourers are so intimidated, that they do not dare to purchase Liberal papers openly or to have them seen in their houses. I am credibly informed that Liberal papers are placed for them in holes and corners of the hedges, and behind trees. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen laugh at that fact, but I do not see why they should do so, or why the evidence that I, as a fairly impartial man, submit should not be received. I have not declaimed against the Primrose League, nor have I denounced the Tory Party in impatient or extravagant terms. I have endeavoured to lay facts before the House, in answer to distinct challenges from the opposite side. Reference has been made to meetings at which labourers are afraid to show their opinions, or display any party feeling. I can distinctly testify to cases in a village in Northamptonshire—to meetings. At one of these, representatives of the landlords were not present, but at the other there were a number of servants from the "big house" in attendance, or standing round. I can testify myself to the fact, that, in the first case, where no representatives of the landlords were present, the labourers who attended displayed their Liberal sentiments, whilst, in the other case, they obviously concealed their sentiments and views. I thank the House for having allowed me to make this statement, and I hope hon. Members on the other side, instead of meeting with contemptuous ridicule and equally contemptuous silence, these replies to their challenges, will make some endeavour to answer and refute the charges I have brought against them.

MR. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid): We have heard a great deal during recent debates of hon. Members having a special mandate from their constituencies. If I have had a special mandate from my constituency it certainly is with regard to this Boycotting system known as the Primrose League. I wish to approach the question with moderation, believing that our cause is good enough not to require the use of any violent phrases. I know several specific cases of Boycotting by the League in my Division. Here is one. A man who was employed in a foundry for 40 years expressed political views in favour of myself. He was a very active partizan; but very shortly after the Election he was sent about his business. That is one specific case. Another case to which I would refer occurred shortly after the last Election. A number of colliers were going up in the cage, and when they had just started from the bottom of the pit one of them cried out, "Three cheers for Jacoby!" One of the managers happened to hear of it, and immediately ordered the cage to be lowered. The cage was lowered, and the unfortunate victim of this system—who was good enough to cheer me as the Representative of the Constituency—was asked to give his name. The man who had cheered refused to acknowledge himself, and thereupon the manager said that unless the name of the transgressor was announced, he should discharge all the colliers in the cage. Upon this the collier in question gave his name, and he was discharged then and there. But perhaps one of the most ingenious cases of the working of the Primrose League occurred in the case of the schoolmaster in one of the villages in my Division. There were a few Radicals there, but it was very difficult, owing to the tyranny of the League, to know who were Radicals and who were Tories; so the national schoolmaster in that village made each child write a political essay, and by those means endeavoured to find what were the politics of the parents. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen cry "Oh, oh!" but I can assure the House that this specific charge can be proved before a Committee, if a Committe of Inquiry is appointed. I do not wish to take up the time of the House any further. I am thankful to hon. Members for having, on the very first occasion on which I have had the honour to address the House, received me with such great kindness. I only hope in all seriousness—I believe hon. Gentlemen on the other side are in their heart of hearts in favour of fair play—and I venture to hope that they will not hesitate to cause a searching inquiry into these grave questions of intimidation which have been stated to the House. I trust they will not hesitate to enable this stigma to be removed if the charges are not true, to enable those who are at fault to prove the emptiness of the allegations if they are not correct.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Mr. Speaker——

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has already spoken, and has, therefore, exhausted his right.

Main Question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair," put, and *agreed to.*

SUPPLY—NAVY ESTIMATES.

Supply—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum not exceeding £211,300, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the Expenses of the Admiralty Office, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1888."

Sir EDWARD REED (Cardiff): I presume it is not the intention of the Government to proceed with this Vote to-night?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): No, Sir; I shall not proceed with the Navy Votes at this time of night (12.35).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

Motion *agreed to,*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Monday* next.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT (1854) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.—[Bill 184.]

(*Mr. King, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Lacaita, Mr. White, Mr. Puleston, Lord Claud Hamilton, Admiral Field, Mr. Bond.*)

COMMITTEE. [*Progress 5th April.*]

Bill *considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 (Short title).

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 6, to leave out the word "pilots."—(*Mr. King.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'pilots' stand part of the Clause."

Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston): I do hope the Government will not sanction this Bill. I cannot describe the Bill in any other terms than that it is a pure piece of Protection. The object of the measure is to prevent foreign masters and mates from dispensing with the service of English pilots. I do not intend to take up much of the time of the Committee in discussing the matter; but I desire to say that the object of our Pilotage Laws is simply the preservation of ships, and not the employment of pilots; and the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) must be well aware that the sole effect of this Bill will be not to strengthen these laws, but to do away with the privilege that owners of ships have of allowing such masters and mates as they employ, though they may happen to be foreigners, who have certificates of competence as pilots in our waters, to navigate their vessels without their being compelled to employ English pilots. The hon. Gentleman is probably aware that he answered a Question to that effect a few days ago, and stated that the total number of foreigners who possess certificates for navigating the waters of the United Kingdom is 35, of which I think only five are now in operation. I am not quite sure as to the particular number in operation; but I know that 35 is the total number of certificates of the description I have described which have been issued to foreigners. Of course, the argument used against my contention is that by granting certificates to foreigners we are enabling those foreigners, or we may enable them, to come to our shores and become familiar with our waters, and thus secure knowledge which may be extremely prejudicial to us in times of war or emergency. But I should like to know how much knowledge is given to a pilot by granting him a certificate of competency. The knowledge of these men may be just the same whether they receive a certificate or not, and a knowledge of our waters could be used by foreign seamen in the event of lamentable occurrences, such as the outbreak of war. In such an event, you may depend upon it, foreign countries are not going to trouble themselves about such matters as our laws relating to pilots. The object of this Bill is to prevent, as far as it goes, the employment of foreign pilots on any ships entering British ports, and the extent to which we have suffered up till now by the present entirely open system is, as I say, that only 35 certificates have been granted in all our ports. The only country in which we have reciprocal privileges is Sweden; but even that reciprocity cannot be carried on if this Bill passes, because this measure will finally shut the door to every foreign country, even those which may be willing to concede to us the privilege we at present concede to them. It seems to me there is no other description for this Bill than that it is a piece of Protection in the teeth of the policy of this country for the past 40 years. The Board of Trade in itself cannot be willing that this Bill should be passed in the face of the policy they have maintained up till now. I cannot believe the Government are going to accede to it. I certainly shall divide the Committee against the Bill, and I beg, Sir, to move that you do now leave the Chair.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair."—(*Mr. C. T. D. Acland.*)

Mr. KING (Hull, Central): I will not trouble the Committee with more than a few remarks. The hon. Gentleman who has just spoken appears to think that he settles the question by giving the Bill a bad name. It is a custom hon. Members have on the other side of the House. But I venture to put this measure forward on an entirely different basis. I may say I am one of the most earnest Free Traders in the House, and I submit this Bill involves no principle of Protection. Protection has nothing whatever to do with the matter. This is simply an attempt on my part, and on the part of those who are acting with me in this matter, to secure, so far as the Government are concerned, that they will not allow a state of things to continue prejudicial to British labour, and in favour of foreign labour. The hon. Member states that there are only five licences to foreigners in existence at the present moment. [Mr. C. T. D. Acland: No; 35.] Well, that is a very small matter, and I would point out that it is proposed to amend the clauses of the Bill so as to provide that those 35 holders of licences shall not be interfered with, and that the clauses in regard to the granting of certificates to foreigners shall only apply to the future. The Bill will affect fresh licences, and not those already granted. It will not affect those who hold licences at the present time; and I venture to say that it is a very proper measure for the Committee to pass.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): The hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. King) seems hardly to understand the provisions of his own Bill; because, so far as I understand it, all the licences given to foreigners, as ordinary licences, do expire at the end of the year, and these licences that are particularly in question will not be renewed even if the Amendment of the hon. Baronet (Sir Edward Birkbeck) is accepted. I confess that the Amendments placed on the Paper to the Bill by the hon. Baronet will very much mitigate the original severity of the measure; but even after those Amendments, the Bill will stand, in my mind, exactly in its hideous nakedness as regards principle. There are certain ports that are well known where compulsory pilots are employed. This Bill lays down the principle of the protection of the English pilot against the foreign pilot being employed. It is entirely a matter of Protection for the English pilot, providing that the foreign pilot shall not be introduced against him. The same question has been raised in America. The question at stake on this occasion is exactly that discussed in America, with reference to Chinese labour. It is the question we have frequently heard raised in this country with regard to Irish labour. The object of the Bill is simply to protect an already privileged interest, and to make compulsory pilotage still more compulsory, and to prevent in free ports pilots being employed being citizens of foreign countries. What is the state of the case at this moment? Why, one of the most important steamship lines visiting this country is the Zealand Company. That Company already has four steamers to provide for the three running, and they have three crews. They are about to have seven vessels, so as to keep up a night and day service, and they will have six crews. In every one of these crews there is a Dutch pilot who is acquainted with the difficult navigation of the Thames, and by this Bill you are going to compel this Company to dispense with those Dutch pilots, and to take in their place English pilots. As was said by a high authority on one occasion, pilots exist for the sake of ships, and not ships for the sake of pilots. These Dutch ships are of Clyde build, and it is obviously to our interest to encourage trade with these foreign countries, and to encourage trade with their ports as well as our own shipbuilding. If they choose to employ their own pilots who know our waters rather than to carry English pilots, surely it is to the interest of the trade of this country that the greatest possible facilities should be given to them for carrying on their trade in the mode most convenient to themselves. This Bill seems to be an utterly retrograde movement. As to the question of accepting this Bill as a protection to the country in time of war, I would point out that, either with or without the Bill, it would be impossible for foreign pilots to take undue advantage of any knowledge they might possess. So far as the Thames is concerned — and the conditions of other ports and waters are very similar — English pilots, when the weather was at all hazy and the buoys were up, would be unable to navigate it. Hon. Members opposite must bear in mind that we are not going to depend upon foreign pilots. And then, again, with regard to the question of protecting the country against emergency, it must be remembered that a great number of foreign seamen know our waters as well as we do ourselves. The effect of passing this Bill will be to put up a bar to Free Trade, and, therefore, I hope the Government will not allow it to pass. Even with the Amendments which the hon. Member for East Norfolk (Sir Edward Birkbeck) proposes, it would deprive all foreigners who have got licences of the power of acting as pilots at the end of the current year. If the Committee chooses to go on with the consideration of this Bill—and I do not think it will—I shall suggest, when the proper time comes, an Amendment to enable foreigners at present holders of certificates of competency to continue to hold their licences.

Mr. PULESTON (Devonport): What is the position of pilots in this country? Let us consider what it really is. Hon. Members talk about doing away with Chinese cheap labour in America, and so forth; but I would point out that America is on an entirely different footing to us, and, apart from the question of cheap labour, I advocate the Bill on the higher ground of protection of life at sea.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: These foreign pilots are all examined and licensed.

Mr. PULESTON: Yes; but you cannot have as efficient a body of men for the navigation of English waters as English pilots. Why should you allow foreign pilots to come and interfere with English pilots? Why should you allow foreigners to come from ports which your own pilots are not allowed to navigate? It is for the strongest of all reasons—namely, the protection of life at sea—that I advocate this Bill. If you allow that the pilots of this country are, as a rule, capable of navigating vessels, and of doing what we see they are doing—and I suppose a better class of men never existed in this country or any other than our British pilots—I think you should confine yourselves to the service of these men. It is all very well to say that foreign pilots have passed examinations; but there will be no English pilots to be examined in a short time, if we curtail their business and make it useless for them to fit themselves for the work of piloting. I think the present system bears very hardly upon these men. I do not think the hon. Baronet (Sir Joseph Pease) intended any slur upon our pilots when he said there was not one of them who could navigate the Thames.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: What I said was that the navigation of the Thames was so difficult that even our own pilots cannot bring a vessel up the river in hazy weather when the buoys are up.

Mr. PULESTON: Does the hon. Baronet mean to say that foreigners could do it?

Sir JOSEPH PEASE: No. My argument was this—that in time of war, when you pull up the buoys, you would be perfectly safe against foreign pilots acquainted with the navigation of the river, simply because they would not be able to navigate any more than yonr own pilots.

Mr. CRAIG (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): It is a surprising thing that not one of the Gentlemen who have spoken in favour of the Bill has ventured to explain its meaning. I will tell the House what its meaning is. In the year 1854 the Merchant Shipping Act was passed, a clause of which provided that every master or mate who should apply to the pilotage authority of any district in the Kingdom might, by passing an examination, obtain a certificate of competency, which, for the short space of 12 months, would allow him to pilot a particular ship or ships for the same owners in British waters. That privilege has been conferred since the year 1854. Well, by this Bill, which the hon. Member for Central Hull (Mr. King) tells us is not a Protectionist measure, it is sought to go back on the policy which this country has deliberately adopted for the last 30 or 40 years—to reverse that policy in the most extraordinary manner. I will tell the Committee why this Bill was not blocked. On the 28th of January a Bill was introduced into the House bearing a title almost identical with that of this Bill except as to one feature. It was called the "Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment Bill." That, I say, was introduced on the 28th January. It was put down for second reading on the 15th of June. On the 28th of February a second Bill was introduced, with the heading "To be substituted for the Bill already delivered," and it was intituled the "Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill."

Mr. KING: I am sure the hon. Member does not wish to misrepresent the matter. There was a printer's error in this matter, and the Bill that the hon. Member speaks of was the No. 1 Bill.

Mr. CRAIG: I accept the explanation of the hon. Member; but I was only stating the reason why the "Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill" was not blocked. The reason was that it was thought to be the same Bill as that which was brought forward a month earlier. I have said that not one Gentleman who is responsible for this Bill—that is to say, whose name is on the back of it—has ventured to explain its provisions. When we come to the question of policy, we shall find that we shall reverse the Free Trade principles that this country and both sides of the House have adopted for the last 30 or 40 years. By this Bill we shall go back upon that policy, because we shall declare that no foreigners shall have the privileges continued which they have enjoyed for the last 30 or 40 years. I maintain that it was due to this Committee that those who bring forward such a Bill as this, and those on the Front Ministerial Bench who justify, or attempt to justify, the measure, and who have connived at its introduction, should say something in support of its principle.

The SECRETARY to the BOARD of TRADE (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): The word the hon. Member has used is not a complimentary one. I appeal to the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Craig.

Mr. CRAIG: I would say sympathize with the Bill, if the hon. Gentleman objects to the word "connive." That the Government sympathize with the Bill, I take it from the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), who said that the Government made a practice of blocking all measures with which they did not agree. The fact that they did not block this one shows that they did not disagree with it. Can that be taken as an indication or not? I think it is due to the Committee that in connection with an important measure of this kind, which involves a reversal of that which has been our national policy for the last 30 or 40 years, and a policy under which we have invited and welcomed to our shores foreign brains, energy, intellect, and industry—I think it is due to us that this Bill should have been explained. It has never been explained to the Committee why this great privilege, which has been granted to foreign shipowners for 32 years, of making their masters and mates responsible pilots of their ships if they prove their competence to navigate in our waters, should be withdrawn. The effect of a Bill like this, if passed, will be to stir up Protectionist reactionaries on the Continent, and put a weapon in their hands which will be used with fatal force against the interests of this country. Your compensation will be that you will have the sorry satisfaction of preventing 35 competent masters and mates from piloting their ships as they have done hitherto in our waters. That is only a small portion of the question. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] "Oh!" you say. I go further. I do not think you know what the Bill means. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Well, I do not want to convince you all. I want to convince those hon. Gentlemen who say they do not wish to return to the practice of Protection. The first point I would put before them is this—that the certificates of these masters and mates are only valid for one year, and they are limited strictly for use in the ship or ships of the owner who employs them. What harm can there be in these certificates being used under such conditions by foreigners? I spoke to a gentleman the other day about this Bill. He said—"My father in 1805 would often pilot his own vessel when coming out of the Baltic, and on one occasion he met a British Fleet after the buoys and beacons had been taken up, who asked him to pilot them down to a certain place. He said he could do so, and he did so." He was a foreigner there. There are three clauses of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 which will be affected by this Bill. Clause 342 gives powers to the Board of Trade. It says that if any pilotage authority whose duty it is to examine any master or mate—the word "foreign" does not occur in the original Act—who applies under that Act for examination, refuses to grant an examination, he shall have an appeal to the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade shall examine him and give him a certificate if he be competent. I understood the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade to tell us the other night that out of 35 certificates which had been granted under Section 340 of the Act of 1854, 30 were at this moment in abeyance—I think he used the word "suspended"—were suspended until he saw, or the Board of Trade saw, what the House would do with this Bill. I want to know where the Board of Trade obtained that suspensory power? It may have suspensory power, but it is not in the Act of 1854, which imposed upon them the duty of doing that which any Pilotage Board might neglect to do. It is not only in connection with pilots that we have this outcry about foreigners. We have had it already in our large ports with reference to the employment of foreign seamen; and I declare to the Committee, with perfect knowledge of what I am stating, that in the years 1873-4-5, if we had not been able to employ foreign seamen, many of our ships would not have been able to go to sea. It is well known that wages at our ironworks and at our collieries, and in other branches of labour, were so high and remunerative that a great many English seamen preferred to stop on shore to going to sea, and it is also well known that their places could not have been filled up unless we had had recourse to those excellent sailors whom we obtained from Scandinavia. Then, when the coal and iron trade is dull again, we have an outcry against the employment of foreign seamen. "Send them back, and do not employ them," they say.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): I understand, Sir, that the Motion before the Committee is that you do leave the Chair, which is the same as a Motion that you do report Progress and ask leave to sit again. I understand that it is out of Order to discuss the substance of a Bill upon such a Motion. I wish to ask, therefore, whether the hon. Member is not out of Order in the observations he is making?

The CHAIRMAN: The Motion to report Progress refers to subsequent proceedings; but the Motion for the Chairman to leave the Chair is one directed at the Bill itself, and is one which, if passed, would kill the measure altogether.

Mr. CRAIG: I was about to say that under the Act of 1854 not only could masters and mates apply to be pilots of their own ships, but foreign seamen and masters could go further, and apply to be licensed as masters; and many foreigners have availed themselves of the privilege with great advantage to our shipping. I know the truth of what

I am saying. I have known foreigners who commanded British vessels, and who performed their duties admirably, and were selected for the posts because they knew certain waters betters than British sailors. There is a cry that foreign seamen should be withdrawn from English ships. What will be the result if you pass this Bill? It will be but the beginning of an insidious attempt to turn back the tide of progress and furnish reactionaries in this country with a weapon by which the cry of Reciprocity and Retaliation will be intensified and increased. I am astonished at this Bill being brought forward, when I remember what a large amount of foreign immigration there is in this country. I am astonished at this Bill being introduced when I look at these Benches and at the Benches opposite, and when I remember the great support we have received on both sides from hon. Gentlemen whose families were foreigners a generation ago. I am delighted to see foreigners, or the descendants of foreigners, in this House. I welcome them here, and delight to see them come here, and give us the benefit of their intelligence and of their great industry. I delight to see their children take part in our affairs like ourselves; and I am astonished that on the Benches opposite should be found men to give this Bill support. I submit that before a measure of this kind is passed it requires fuller and freer discussion; and I trust that in the words of the Motion you, Sir, will leave the Chair.

SIR EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): The hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. Craig) who has just sat down has appealed to hon. Members whose names are on the back of the Bill to explain its provisions. I feel that the hon. Gentleman has not looked at the Notices on the Paper with reference to the Bill—I mean the Amendments. There are several that stand in my own name, and if they are accepted the Bill will be reduced to a very short measure, particularly under the fourth Amendment. I would wish to represent to the Committee that, if these Amendments are adopted, this Bill will not be in conflict necessarily with existing Treaties with Foreign Powers. I believe I am right in saying that these Amendments have met with the approval of the Law Officers of the Government, as well as of the Foreign Office; and I think those hon. Members who have already spoken have entirely forgotten the fact that England is the first Maritime Nation in the world, having 5,000 pilots around her coasts, every one of them engaged in protecting our shipping trade, and doing much on behalf of the preservation of life. I think hon. Members have ignored that fact—those hon. Members who wish to place the shipping of the country in the hands of less capable men than our own pilots. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Yes; much less capable men than our own pilots, of whom the nation has always been proud, and of whom I hope we shall always continue to be proud. I think that hon. Members have forgotten that at the present time that any sailing vessel or steamer plying from a British port is compelled, on entering a foreign port, with the exception of those of Sweden, to take a foreign pilot. I quote simply the case of the Great Eastern Railway Company's steamers which go over to Holland. They have to employ permanently Dutch pilots to take their steamers into the Dutch ports. And why should not the Dutch Government, or the owners of Dutch steamers trading with England, do what we do, and on entering English ports, and in bringing vessels out of English ports, employ English pilots? It is simply nothing but reciprocity and fair play as between nation and nation. I have mentioned that there is only Sweden that permits English masters to take English vessels into its ports; and Sweden, as a matter of fact, is the only country in the world which grants us fair reciprocity. With regard to the question of life saving, the Committee will agree with me that, as Chairman of the Lifeboat Institute, no one can wish to do more in the interests of saving life at sea as the head of that Institution. It has been proved, beyond doubt, that British pilots are the most capable pilots in the whole world, and best able to take charge of vessels bound to our ports; and I do not see why hon. Members opposite should wish to discourage these brave men when there are thousands of them who have done their utmost for the whole trade of the world; and I do not see why hon. Members should wish to hand over to foreign masters and mates, who are less capable than our own these great shipping interests, instead of insisting on keeping them in the hands of our people. As I have already said, if these Amendments are carried out, the Bill will be a very short one indeed; and I think it is only fair play, as between nation and nation, that the principle of the measure should be adopted. We do not wish—I myself, and I am sure my hon. Friend in charge of the Bill does not wish—to raise any foreign complication, or to be unjust to any foreign nation. We simply seek for common justice as between nation and nation.

THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Baron HENRY DE WORMS) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I rise for the purpose of correcting an error into which the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has fallen. I understood him to say that it was compulsory on the Board of Trade, under the clause he quoted, to grant certificates. If he will refer to the clause, he will see that the Board of Trade may grant certificates.

MR. CRAIG: No; it means "shall."

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: No; it is "may."

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): This discussion is somewhat unfortunate at the present time. I certainly am disposed to give fair consideration to the proposal that is made to extend legitimate protection to British pilots. I have been in communication with a good many of the Irish pilots on this question, and they have requested me to support a proposal to inquire into their case. I understand that a proposal has been submitted to the Government to appoint a Select Committee on the subject — to refer the matter to the consideration of a Select Committee. In face of that request—which I myself signed—we are called upon to consider this Bill, and it is undoubtedly the fact that the case for the measure has not been submitted to the Committee. I would not, at the present moment, undertake to say whether the Bill is a good or a bad one. It is one of those measures which, I think, even in this Committee, would give rise to considerable discussion, and which, after consideration, should be reasonably amended. But, so far as we have gone, we are in this position—we are asked right off to pass a Bill which the Committee practically knows very little about—which no Member of the Committee who is not connected with the Mercantile Marine, or who is not intimately acquainted with maritime subjects, can be expected to understand. It is a very small and short measure, and that fact may be advanced in favour of its being pushed rapidly through the House. But, as a matter of fact, these small Bills are always the most dangerous. Some of them contain most pernicious principles, and, on account of their very smallness, are sometimes adopted without due precautions being taken as to their real meaning. It would be a most inconvenient thing for the Committee to pass the Bill through hurriedly, and then to be asked, in a Session or two, to repeal its provisions. The present Government, as I understand, is a Government of examination and inquiry. I am surprised that they have been able to make up their minds so rapidly with regard to this Bill. On the part of hon. Gentlemen who sit around me, I would say we are quite prepared to enter into the consideration of this question, so far as it affects some of the Irish pilots; but we think it only reasonable that the wishes of hon. Gentlemen on this side, representing English public opinion, should be consulted. The reason I said that the discussion was unfortunate at the present time is this. According to your ruling, Sir, if the Motion that you do leave the Chair is carried, the Bill is killed, and it will not be possible to have an inquiry into its proposal pending the final vote; whereas if, at an earlier stage, it had been decided to refer the subject to a Select Committee, we should have had an opportunity of inquiring into the matter, the Committee might have reported in favour of the main lines of the Bill, and we should have had it carried through and passed this Session. Owing to the course the supporters of the Bill have taken, if we go on with it now the probability is that the House will be led to reject it *in toto*. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, may be the House will not reject it; but, speaking for myself, I must say that if the supporters of the measure insist upon its being carried right off, I shall vote in favour of its rejection—that is to say, I shall vote for the Motion now before the Committee. At the same time, if it had been proposed to refer the matter to a Select

Committee I should have voted in favour of it.

Mr. WHITE (Gravesend): I should not have risen in this debate if it had not been that I represent a pilot constituency, and take a great interest in their welfare. I believe most heartily in their grievance, remembering that they have had to serve their apprenticeship to piloting, and that, to a certain extent, their living is taken away from them by the provisions of the Act of 1854, which enables foreign pilots to pilot vessels in English waters. A great deal has been said by hon. Members opposite about this proposal being a return to Protection. Hon. Gentlemen opposite look upon Protection as a crime. If it is, the fiscal policy of other nations is criminal. I deny that it is a crime; but I am as real a Free Trader as anyone in this House, and on the principles of Free Trade I support this Bill. Whilst we are Free Traders, we cannot hide from ourselves that every other nation in the world is exactly the reverse; and it seems to me to be an anomaly that the captain of a foreign ship should be able to obtain a certificate to pilot his ship in British waters, and that yet, at the same time, the country from which he hails should not permit him to take his ship back again into his native waters, compelling him to take a pilot on board the moment he enters them. The cry of Protection that is raised about this Bill is absurd. One would think that some enormous imposts were about to be levied upon imports by the simple act of compelling every foreign ship to take an English pilot on board in English pilotage waters. Why, Sir, the fact is that the expense of doing so only amounts to a few pounds per ship. The ship, or rather its owner, has to pay so much, acccording to the draught of water — some £18 or £20, which, when distributed over valuable cargoes, amounts to a mere trifle. It is hard, I say, that English pilots who have served their time should be put in needless competition with men who have not done so. For these reasons I beg to support the Bill.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington): The opposition of my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. Craig) to this Bill has been based upon the allegation that it infringes the principles of Free Trade. I oppose this Bill not merely because it infringes the principles of Free Trade, but because it does more—it proposes to inflict a great injustice upon certain owners and masters of foreign ships by taking away from them a right which they have enjoyed since 1854. By the law of this country certain ports have this peculiarity—that no ship can enter them except under the charge of a pilot. The law is one the policy of which has long been recognized as exceptionable. It is objectionable on many grounds, and its principle is one which is likely to receive reconsideration before long at the hands of the Legislature. Recognizing its injustice and hardship, Mr. Cardwell introduced a Bill, I think in 1853, which became law the next year, and which is now known as the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854. That Act got rid of the anomaly under which certain ports were in the position that ships could not enter them except under the charge of pilots. That Act enabled masters and mates of any ship, whether British or foreign, to get rid of the gross hardship of having to take a pilot on board in cases where it was wholly unnecessary, by permitting them to obtain certificates of their competency to pilot the ship themselves. They were thus enabled to avoid the expense of taking a pilot on board. It is, I think, Section 340 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, which relieves masters and mates of certain ships from this hardship which the law imposed upon them. The relief was granted to masters and mates of all ships, whether British or foreign. Now, one of the objects of the present Bill is to repeal that section which relieves foreign masters and mates from that gross hardship, and to confine the exemption to the case of British masters and men. I think that this is a proposition which does something more than infringe the principles of Free Trade. It really contemplates an act of great injustice, and an act which would not be tolerated if it were considered and understood in all its fulness throughout the country. Now, it is suggested that the Amendments which are proposed to be made in Committee on this Bill make the matter different. I do not see they do in the slightest degree. Instead of amending certain specific sections, they propose to make a wholesale alteration on the whole law—to exempt from that beneficial principle which I have mentioned in Mr. Cardwell's Act foreign masters and mates only. Believing this Bill to contemplate a very great injustice, believing it to contemplate not only such an injustice, but to depart from what has been the uniform practice of the Board of Trade for 30 years, and adhering strictly and rigidly to the principles of Free Trade, I shall do all I can to prevent the passing of this measure.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I should like to know from the Government whether or not it is their intention to allow a Bill to pass through this House which only affects 35 persons? We hear a great deal about obstruction; but really, if the British Parliament is to countenance the bringing in of Bills which only affect every 35 of the population of these Kingdoms, we shall require, not one Parliament, but a very vast number of Parliaments, to transact our Business. What has taken place in regard to this Bill is certainly a justification for the wholesale blocking of Bills. This Bill was not blocked simply because hon. Gentlemen did not understand what its real purport was; but now, when the Bill is explained, we find it is of an exceedingly mischievous nature. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny) has suggested that the Bill should be sent to a Select Committee. If the supporters of the Bill agree to the adoption of that suggestion, I do not think the Committee would do well to waste any more time over it; but if, on the other hand, the supporters of the Bill refuse to send it to a Select Committee, I think the only course open to the opponents of the Bill is to use every power they possess to prevent any further progress being made with it to-night. I appeal to whoever represents the Government on the present occasion to accept the suggestion of my hon. Friend. If the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) were here, I would appeal to him whether or not he, as Leader of the Government and of the House, would allow the time of the Committee to be occupied by a squabble over a trumpery thing of this sort, which, if not mischievous, certainly cannot have any substantial beneficial effect?

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I confess to a feeling of some surprise that no Member of the Government has given us an opinion on this Bill. I hoped that when the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) rose, he would, as representing the Department which is most seriously affected, give us the opinion of the Government in regard to the Bill; but he did nothing of the kind. What we have heard of the Bill is not calculated to increase our confidence in it. Two arguments have been advanced in its favour. One of these is that it will lead to the protection of life and property at sea. Now, there is not the slightest allegation that these 35 persons to whom certificates have been given are less competent to take ships up rivers than the British masters and mates; therefore, there is no ground for supposing that life and property will be any safer if the Bill passes than if it is rejected. I must remind the Committee that if it be true that British pilots are any better than the persons who have obtained these certificates from the Board of Trade, the owners of foreign vessels will have every possible incentive to employ British pilots. It is to the interest of the owners of foreign vessels that their vessels should be taken safely into port, and therefore it is natural they will only employ competent pilots. That part of the case breaks down completely, and there is nothing whatever in the remarks of the hon. Member for Devonport (Mr. Puleston) which, to my mind, goes to support the Bill. The other argument advanced in favour of the Bill is that used by the hon. Baronet the Member for East Norfolk (Sir Edward Birkbeck), and he spoke much more to the real merits of the Bill; in fact, he let the cat out of the bag. The hon. Baronet admitted that this is a measure for Reciprocity—that it is a mask intended to conceal the hateful features of Protection. He really avowed that this is a measure of Protection. He said the object of the Bill is to compel foreign countries to do for our pilots what we have hitherto done for theirs—to do for British masters of vessels entering foreign ports what the English law has hitherto allowed to be done for foreign masters and mates of foreign vessels. In other words, this is a sort of declaration of war against foreign masters and mates, in order to induce their countries to do the same thing as we have hitherto done. Does the hon. Baronet really suppose that petty retaliations of this kind, applying to 35 persons only, will have the slightest affect on any foreign country? Does he think it worth while, for the sake of so small a number of persons, to alter the law, to depart from the policy which this country has followed for years, to supply a precedent for future movements in the same direction, and to show what I must call a petty and trivial spirit on the part of a great country like this, a spirit which has been a stranger to all our recent legislation? I cannot help thinking, Sir, that although this is a very small matter in itself—it only affects 35 persons—the principle involved is not a small one. The principle does deserve the attention of the Committee, and unless we hear some better reasons from the Government in favour of this Bill I hope the Committee will reject it. I say nothing about the legal question which my hon. Friend the Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane) has discussed; but I am bound to say I am not satisfied, on the ground of Commercial Treaties, that the Bill is not objectionable. I had hoped we should have heard something upon the point from some of the Members of the Government who have considered the question. The hon. Baronet (Sir Edward Birkbeck) seems to have entertained some apprehension, because he said this is not seriously in conflict with existing Treaties. It ought not to be adopted if it is in even the smallest conflict with existing Treaties. I speak not without some hesitation, because we have not heard the views of the Government. I hope they will not only tell us what the legal question is, but also give us their views as to the policy of the change, and explain whether, if they do press the Bill, they think a change should be made in our commercial relations with other countries.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER) (Isle of Wight): Hon. Gentlemen opposite attach a great deal of importance to this Bill, and therefore they will, no doubt, hear a few words from me. I will deal, in the first place, with the last point raised by the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce)—namely, the effect of the Bill upon Treaties. As I understand the matter, it stands in this way. We do not propose that the owners of foreign vessels shall in any way lose the privilege of having their vessels piloted in ports by a master or mate who is a British subject. I think the hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. Craig) will, if he looks carefully through the Bill, acknowledge that all that is now proposed is that in future no pilot certificate should be granted to any person other than a British subject. There is not one word about the master or mate of a foreign ship. The person certificated may be a master or mate of a foreign ship; the question is whether he is a British subject. Some time ago an Amendment to this Bill was put on the Paper extending the Bill so as to exclude British subjects who are masters or mates of foreign ships. Now, with regard to the question of Treaty rights, the only provision which could in any way have infringed such rights would have been a provision excluding from certificates masters or mates of foreign ships. As regards the 35 men who have had certificates granted to them, I think there ought to be no objection to their continuing to hold them. If a man has at present the privilege of an English pilot certificate, he should be allowed to continue to use it. I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen has been in communication with those who had to consider this matter when the last Government was in Office; but I think it will be found, on inquiry, that the opinion was very strongly held by the late Law Officers that it was not competent, as the existing law stands, to grant certificates to foreign subjects. When the hon. Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane) says that it is intended by this Bill to withhold this privilege from foreigners as distinguished from British subjects, and to revert to an old state of affairs, I think he cannot have had his attention called to the circumstances which led to the passing of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854. At the time of the passing of that Act it was considered a hardship that in the case of a ship, particularly a British vessel, constantly trading with a particular port—say a vessel belonging to Hull, and constantly running in and out of that port—the master of such a vessel should be obliged to take a pilot on board, when the master might know the port almost as well as the pilot.

Now it does seem to me, and those who have considered this matter, that there may be serious objections to the authorities being compelled, or to there being a practice, to grant pilotage certificates to those who are not British subjects. If the master or mate of a ship trading constantly—say, between Hull and Sweden—is competent to pilot the ship, and is a British subject, let him receive a certificate; but to say that certificates are to be granted to persons who are not British subjects is going beyond the question. It is not a question of protecting British pilots. As a matter of fact, we get under Treaties no reciprocity in this matter. Foreign nations—with the exception, possibly, of Sweden—give to us no similar privileges. This is not, as has been said, a question of Protection. It is simply a question whether, in dealing with the pilotage in our own country, it is not a reasonable and proper thing not to grant pilot certificates to foreigners.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I wish that the explanation of the hon and learned Gentleman the Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) had been more satisfactory. He tells us that he is not quite certain. I do not profess to know much about such matters; but I presume that if Sweden will not be interfered with by this Bill other nations may demand the same treatment. We are now actually legislating in the dark, because we do not know whether the Bill will run counter to one foreign Treaty, which would necessarily involve other foreign nations. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General has said that there is no question of Protection involved in this Bill; but I maintain that the principle of Free Trade is that every in this country has a right to employ in his business whomever he chooses. Here are certain men who are guaranteed by our own authority to be competent pilots; but this Bill says—"You shall not employ these men; or, if you do, you must do so at your peril." Is this not Protection? It is Protection of one kind of commodity against another. Skilled labour is, after all, in some sense, a commodity, and you wish to compel the shipowners of this country to employ one kind of commodity and not another. Why are hon. Gentlemen opposite so anxious about this little Bill, affecting only 35 persons altogether? They wish to insert the thin edge of the wedge, and are anxious to go back to the constituencies and say—"We have, at least, done something." Once adopt this principle, and I do not see why they should not carry it any length. According to one hon. Gentleman opposite, this is intended to secure the employment of natives instead of foreigners. Why not bring in Bills to prevent the employment in this country of foreign carpenters and masons? This is the old principle of Protection; and I do most earnestly protest against the adoption of this Bill at this hour of the night (2.45), when the larger portion of the Committee cannot possibly be aware of the serious question that is involved.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: I should like to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade whether the issue of these certificates has been suspended by the Board of Trade?

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: Yes.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: Then what necessity is there for this Bill, if the Board of Trade has power to refuse the issue of these certificates?

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: I believe the Board of Trade has perfect power; but, in view of conflicting opinions on the part of high legal authorities, it was thought better to have the matter thoroughly cleared up; and, therefore, the hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Hull (Mr. King) produced this Bill.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I hope the House will not go on with the Bill further. I can easily understand that hon. Members are not aware of the full significance of the measure; and the fact that we have reached the Committee stage without discussion of its principles is an additional and overwhelming reason, it seems to me, why there should be no attempt to force it on to-night. At the outset I did not understand the bearings of the Bill, but thought that the proposal was a small and innocent one. I have great respect for the opinion of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General on legal matters; but, when we come to a proposal for the reversal of a well-settled national principle, I am not prepared to accept him as an infallible guide. The hon. Gentleman opposite asserted that the object of this Bill is to insure Reciprocity, or, rather, he argued in its support that because foreign countries do not give certain privileges to British captains and mates, we are entitled to say that these privileges shall not be given by us to foreigners. As I understand the argument of those who support the Bill, they say its object is really to enforce the principle of Reciprocity on this pilotage question; but I think it is rather the principle of retaliation that it seeks to enforce. The principle of Reciprocity will not really apply, because there is only one foreign country which treats British pilots in the same fair and liberal manner as we treat foreign pilots. If that is so, it is clear that, practically speaking, all foreign ships under foreign captains and mates are to be deprived of the privilege which, up to the present, they have been granted by this country; and when the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General says to us that foreign ships may still come here, but must have British captains and mates on board, qualified for the work of piloting, we understand that that makes a small distinction; but we do not see that it seriously affects the principle we are discussing. That is a subterfuge on his part. I see no limit to the arguments of those who support this Bill. I see no limit to the operation of the principle they desire us to support in passing this Bill. The number of pilots who will be affected by the measure is a mere bagatelle; but the principle the Bill assails is an important one. We are amazed that the Government should support the Bill—that they should give countenance to Protection in the veiled fashion they have done to-night; and we are surprised to hear the Secretary to the Board of Trade represent that the Department, on behalf of which he speaks, has an initiatory power in regard to the issue of licences to foreign pilots, and that they have power to act compulsorily, as he has told us to-night that they have acted.

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: The Law Officers of the late Government held exactly the views of the present Board of Trade. I feel obliged to tell the hon. Gentleman that, as it is within my own knowledge.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH: The hon. Gentleman is not going to take his whole guidance on this question from the Law Officers of the late Government, when he has the Attorney General of the present Government on his own side. I insist that it would be an unwise and undesirable thing for us, at this time of night, to take up a Bill of this character, about which the country knows nothing, and will know nothing. I would point out to the promoters of this Bill that they will lose nothing by putting off the consideration of the measure. The Session is not far advanced. The Attorney General says the interests of the men who will be affected by this Bill will be protected; but the interests of these 35 foreign pilots, who hold certificates for navigating in English waters, is a mere bagatelle compared with the great principle involved in this question. If we pass this Bill foreign nations will be entitled to say—"Here is a palpable proof that the British nation are abandoning their principles of Free Trade." ["No, no!"] I am astonished at that interruption. If hon. Gentlemen had listened to the speeches of hon. Gentlemen whose names are on the back of the Bill, they would have heard them tell us that this is "retaliation." I say that is Protection, and I therefore say—How can hon. Members deny that I am stating what is strictly accurate when I declare that foreign countries will use those words? How can the Representatives of the Government hold themselves justified in allowing a Bill of this immense importance—a Bill which may have an international operation—to go forward at 2 o'clock in the morning. I think we may well ask, Sir, that you do now leave the Chair.

Mr. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.): The argument that seems to be principally used by hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House is this—that because we have been acting wrongly towards British seamen for the last 32 years, therefore we are to continue doing so. We ought to be able to appeal to Irish Members and to Scotch Members, as well as to English Members, not to continue a system which is eminently unfair to British seamen. There is no doubt whatever that the more chance we give foreigners to go up and down our rivers, and to enter our harbours, the better they will be able to act against us in time of war. But, apart from this question of danger in time of war, I maintain that we should be incurring less risk of collisions in our crowded harbours and rivers if served by pilots who have lived in or about British ports all their lives than by foreign mates or captains, who may have obtained pilots' certificates for British waters.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I think there are one or two points on which we ought to press for a distinct answer from the Government. The hon. Gentleman who represents the Board of Trade in this House (Baron Henry De Worms) stated that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Hull (Mr. King), who introduced this Bill, was acting practically under the instructions of the late Law Officers of the Crown. Now, I want to know whether or not we are to take it as a charge against the late Government, that they intended to bring in, or, at any rate, to support, a Protectionist Bill of this kind? ["No, no!"] That is the charge made against the late Government——

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is travelling from the Question before the Committee in entering into that matter.

MR. CONYBEARE: I did not intend to pursue the point, Mr. Courtney, but merely to state that that was the charge distinctly made by a Member of the present Government against the late Government. ["No, no!"] Well, we will wait for further information on the subject. The same Member of the Government who brought this charge against Her Majesty's late Advisers seems to admit his share in a distinct piece of illegality. He tells us that 30, out of 35, pilots have been suspended—that is to say, that their certificates have not been renewed. He has been challenged as to whether the Board of Trade has power, under the existing law, to refuse to renew a certificate, and he frankly tells us that it is a moot point.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: Nothing of the sort. That does not convey what I expressed. If the hon. Member will take the trouble to read the 342nd clause of the Act of 1852, he will find that the granting or renewing of certificates to foreign masters and mates is purely optional.

MR. CONYBEARE: The hon. Gentleman went on to say that the legality of refusing to renew certificates is a moot point.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: Nothing of the kind.

MR. CONYBEARE: He said that the Legal Authorities are in conflict on an important point, and that it was in consequence of that conflict that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Hull had brought in this Bill to settle the matter.

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: Nothing of the kind. I did not say a word of it.

MR. CONYBEARE: Certainly you did, and hon. Gentlemen near me corroborate my recollection. I do not wonder that hon. Gentlemen opposite do not recollect what they say—it is, perhaps, convenient for them not to; for we have had the most amusing theories from them as to what is Protection and what is not. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Hull started by declaring that no one was a stronger Free Trader than he was himself, and in order to give us a clear insight into what he meant by Free Trade he said he was averse to allowing foreign labour to interfere with British labour, and that the object of the Bill was to prevent that interference. Well, what in the world is that but Protection, pure and unadulterated? Every other hon. Member who has spoken in favour of the Bill has used the words "fair play," "justice," "unfair to Englishmen," and a variety of similar expressions. "Fair play" is the constant cry of the Protectionist Party, and in permitting that little expression to escape them hon. Members have let the cat out of the bag. The hon. and learned Attorney General has also made a candid confession. He has admitted, in answer to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Launceston (Mr. C. T. D. Acland), that he is not perfectly certain yet whether the state of International Law with respect to Sweden is as has been stated on his side of the House. If the Members of the Government—if the Law Officers of the Crown who ought to know these things—on an important question like this, affecting international right, tell us that they do not know what the state of the law is, we have a right to ask them to find out the law, and declare it to us, before they take this leap in the dark. It is a monstrous thing for us to legislate on a matter like this, the Law Officers of the Crown not knowing whether or not they are right in the view of the law on which the Government are acting.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: I object to those words being attributed to me. What I said was that I was not certain whether treaty rights with Sweden on this subject existed. I have since ascertained that, as there are no compulsory rights as to Sweden, this question does not arise. Therefore, what I said as to treaty rights is correct.

MR. CONYBEARE: His words were he was "not certain" as to the point raised by my hon. Friend. I am glad he has been able to satisfy himself on the point now, and, of course, I accept his assurance in perfect good faith. Another argument the same hon. and learned Gentleman used was to the effect, as I understood him, that the law, as it exists, is not intended to give a privilege to foreigners. He argued, therefore, or I understood him to argue, that this Bill will not be a return to Protection. But if the law does not actually give privileges to foreigners, or if it does not intend to give privileges to foreigners, it does not refuse those privileges to foreigners; but I understand it is now proposed to take away privileges enjoyed by foreigners without giving them any compensation whatever. It appears to me that these arguments of the hon. and learned Attorney General do not hold water any more than the others. The hon. Baronet the Member for East Norfolk (Sir Edward Birkbeck) said that if his Amendments are accepted the Bill will become a simple matter—it will be reduced to one clause. He seemed to think that a good reason why there should be an end of our discussion, and why the Bill should be allowed to pass. My view is that his one clause will be worse than the whole three he eliminates from the Bill. He said we should not want to place our shipping in the hands of less capable men than our own pilots. I want to know how the foreigners, to whom we have granted certificates of competency, are less capable men than our own pilots, seeing that they have passed the same examination, and received the same certificates, that are granted to our own seamen? This is an attempt to throw dust in our eyes. The hon. Baronet knows that the same argument would apply in other cases. On this side of the House it has been said that if this Bill is passed its principle will be extended—that it will be introducing the thin end of the wedge of Protection, and that we do not know where it will end. If you once begin to eliminate foreigners, you will have to eliminate them from this House. There is more than one foreigner on the Conservative side. They will all have to go. ["Oh, oh!" *and cries of* "Order!"] Well, I am not making a charge—I do not wish to be personal. I will not refer to Members of the Government, or to the Tory Party; but I would say that if you introduce the principle of the elimination of foreigners, we shall have the right to apply it in an extended form. We shall have a right to get rid of the numerous brood of pauper Princes who emigrate over here from Germany. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes. I was down at Sheerness the other day, and I found there, commanding as Admiral of the Dockyard, the Prince of Leiningen; and we have in Dublin, as Commander of the Army in Ireland, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. Gentleman that he is not adhering strictly to the principle of this Bill.

MR. CONYBEARE: The Bill, Sir, affects a principle of such vast magnitude that we do not know how far it will go. I was only pointing out to hon. Gentlemen opposite, how substantially this principle they are laying down may apply to them. I did not see that my observation was so much out of Order.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I rise to Order. Has the hon. Gentleman the right to make these observations?

MR. CONYBEARE: I have already submitted to the Chairman, and was only adding an observation on the matter. It appears to me that the observations that have been advanced on this side of the House are, at any rate, of sufficient weight to render it absolutely impossible that we can proceed with the consideration of the Bill at this hour. As has been already pointed out, if the character of this measure had been known earlier it would have been blocked. We are not satisfied with the explanation given by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Hull, as to this being a No. 2 Bill substituted for a Bill previously delivered. If this is the original Bill with a clerical alteration in it——

MR. KING: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I must say, hon. Gentlemen on that side of the House have a singular facility for saying things in such a way that no one can understand them. If this is not the same Bill as that originally delivered, it is a pity it was not put down for the same day as the original Bill.

Mr. KING: I can only say what was done—I cannot give intelligence to enable a simple explanation to be understood. I have said that this is a different Bill.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am satisfied with the hon. Gentleman's explanation; but I did not understand the matter correctly before. No doubt the misunderstanding was owing to my own obtuseness.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: Hon. Members opposite, as I understand, contend that the Board of Trade have the power to grant or withhold these certificates. In that opinion they are supported both by the present and the late Law Officers of the Crown; and it is said that this Bill is brought forward to make clear the law on the point. Do I understand that to be the case? [Mr. King: Yes.] It is to make the position of the Board of Trade absolutely plain. I would point out, therefore, to the Secretary to the Board of Trade and the hon. and learned Attorney General that the Bill does nothing of the kind. The Board of Trade now claim to enjoy an option; but if we pass this Bill we shall deprive them of that option. It limits and contracts their power, and prevents them from giving certificates of competency to these foreign pilots, even though they may be willing to do so.

Mr. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I regret I was not in my place when the Bill came on. I have a very strong objection to it. The practice has been to create a certain number of certificates of efficiency, and I understand the object of the Bill is to prevent that practice being continued. In my opinion, this is simply the thin end of the wedge. In all our ports there has been an agitation amongst sailors to prevent, if possible, the employment of foreign seamen on board our ships; and I think that, if once we give way on this question, it will certainly encourage that agitation amongst the sailors. I cannot think that the shipowners of this country are yet prepared, at all events, to say that no foreign sailors shall be employed on board their ships. I cannot see how we can carry on our merchant service at the present moment without foreign seamen. I am not, therefore, prepared to support this measure. Many of the arguments used by hon. Gentlemen opposite in support of this measure might, with equal force, be used against the system of employing foreign sailors in our ships. If we passed this measure, we should certainly have retaliation on the part of foreign Governments, which would go a great deal further than this Bill. I am anxious to further the employment of Britons, in place of foreigners, where they can be employed; but if we introduce the principle contained in this Bill, where will it end? Are we to say that Englishmen are to be employed in every position in which we, at present, employ foreigners? Are you to say that no foreign clerks are to be employed in commercial offices? ["Oh, oh!"] Well, the principle is exactly the same. It is simply one of Protection; and if you give protection to English pilots, I cannot see how you can justly withhold it from English clerks. On these grounds I oppose the Bill. It is a step in the direction of compelling our shipowners to employ only English sailors, and our commercial men to employ English clerks.

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I think that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the opposite Benches can hardly be aware that at this moment we are building nearly all the steamers that are being used all over the world, and that the passing of this Bill would have a most irritating effect upon foreigners, particularly upon those for whom we build the ships. It would irritate them on a point on which they are most sensitive. We should immediately have new shipbuilding yards started, probably with Government subsidies, in the Scheldt at Antwerp, at Rotterdam, and at Hamburg. We should have competition subsidized by foreign Governments in retaliation for the shutting out of foreigners. I do not think any Bill so insignificant could be introduced which would lead to such disastrous results to our building yards. Once we begin to prevent the employment of foreigners in any capacity whatever—either as pilots or as seamen, or as officers in our ships—it will stop not only the use of British ships and the employment of British captains, but the building of foreign ships in British ports. If I understand this Bill aright—and I have no doubt the Law Officers of the Crown will inform us whether it is the case or not—if it passes, the mate or any other officer of an English ship, if he happens to be an alien or a foreigner, will be unable to obtain a certificate to bring that ship into an English port. Very likely the foreign officer of an English ship may know the English port he desires to go into a great deal better than he knows any port in his own country. I do not think any Bill could be introduced which would be more mischievous or of greater detriment to our shipbuilding interests on the Clyde, at Belfast, in the Tyne, in the Mersey, or at any of our large building ports than this measure. A more short-sighted measure could scarcely be drafted, and I sincerely hope Her Majesty's Government will reconsider their decision in the matter. I do not think the effect of the Bill has been carefully considered. If it had been, I cannot believe that the measure would have been pressed forward in this way.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): I desire to say just a word or two with the view of removing some misapprehension which seems to exist on this matter. I expect foreigners will continue to get ships built in our yards, as they will be able to get them better and cheaper here than anywhere else. I do not think they would come to us now if they could get ships built as well and as cheap elsewhere. When hon. Gentlemen talk about interfering with the employment of foreign sailors, I would reply that that is not a case in point at all. I should like to tell the House why there is a difficulty in regard to this question of pilots, and why the certificates of these foreigners are suspended. It was because the Law Officers of the late Government advised that, in their opinion, it was not competent to grant certificates to masters and mates of foreign ships because they were not masters and mates within the meaning of the Act of 1854. Why? Because the Merchant Shipping Act has about 180 clauses imposing the most strict conditions on the masters and mates of British ships in point of discipline and education, and laying down all sorts of regulations to which the masters and mates of foreign ships are not subjected. Therefore, the late Law Officers held that masters and mates of foreign ships were not masters and mates within the meaning of the Act of 1854. It is intended by the Bill that certificates should not be issued to such masters and mates in future; but it would be an apparent injustice to deprive of their certificates those masters and mates who have enjoyed them for so many years; therefore, I understand the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill intends to introduce in it words which will save the privileges of foreign masters and mates who hold British certificates. I may say, from my knowledge of where the shoe pinches with foreign countries, that that will remove the objections that have been entertained by more than one country in respect of this Bill—for instance, the steamers that come up from Flushing to the Thames. They have hitherto been piloted by their own masters, and by the words my hon. Friend proposes to introduce into the Bill that privilege will continue, and will altogether remove the objection of the Netherlands Company, and will save that Company, as I have heard, £12,000 a-year in pilotage dues.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE: When the present masters who hold the certificates die, will the new masters receive them?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Certainly not, unless they are British subjects. With very few exceptions the Reciprocity Clauses given in the provisions dealing with foreign pilots give this country nothing at all. Sweden does not insist on pilotage dues; but Norway does not allow a ship to enter her ports without a Norwegian pilot. With the exception of Sweden, Denmark, and Italy, where there are open ports, Marseilles in France, and certain open ports in Australia, there are no foreign ports British ships can enter without paying pilotage dues; whilst we, on the contrary, have thrown our ports open to the Navies of the world. It is proposed that the same obligation shall rest on foreign ships as rests on British ships, and that they shall have either to take a local pilot or to have among their officers a British subject holding a certificate of privilege to pilot them. It is quite evident that there is considerable misconception in respect of the reasons why the certificates of foreign pilots in England have been suspended, and I think it is an important consideration for the Committee. There is no proposal to limit the employment of foreign seamen on board of our vessels. But it is felt, not unnaturally, that foreign mercantile officers do not stand on the same footing as our own before the law, because we impose on our own severe tests and qualifications.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): Mr. Courtney, I have listened with considerable interest to the whole of this debate, and I must say that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) has, by his speech, left my mind more confused upon the subject than it was before he spoke. That may, of course, probably be owing to my dulness of comprehension. I was always under the impression that this was a disabling Bill, curtailing some rights that had already existed or were supposed to exist; but, according to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, it is a Bill intended to extend certain privileges. I beg to remind hon. Gentlemen of the reply given by the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) to the question put to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Tyrone (Mr. M. J. Kenny). My hon. Friend asked whether, at present, there is power to withhold these certificates; and whether, as a matter of fact, they are not withheld; and the hon. Gentleman (Baron Henry De Worms) answered in the affirmative, and added that there was some doubt on the subject, and it was proposed to clear the point up, which object would be attained by this Bill. He says that this opinion was given in the time of the Law Officers of the late Government; but I did not understand him to say whether the Board of Trade acted upon that opinion while the late Government was in Office. If the Government consider that they should support the decision come to by the Department, I wonder they have not brought in a Bill themselves. I wonder they have allowed a private Member to bring in a Bill to support the action of a Government Department. I have no doubt that the Government imagine there is a certain amount of odium attached to anything tainted with Protection, and that, therefore, they did not care to take such a Bill as this into their own hands. Disguise this question as you will, no matter what sophistry you use, this is Protection pure and simple—it is Protection as Protection is understood, and cannot by any possibility be disguised. You have only to extend the principle underlying this Bill to prevent the employment of foreign sailors or to prevent the employment of foreign clerks in this country. I shall vote against this Bill, because I believe it will be fraught with the utmost danger to the interests of this country, and to the principles upon which the trade of this country is founded.

Mr. C. T. D. ACLAND: Mr. Courtney, I think I am entitled to a definite answer from the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade, as to whether he really does support the policy embodied in this Bill? I do not think it has been made at all clear that it is only in consequence of the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown given last year that the Board of Trade are now prepared to support a Bill really narrowing instead of enlarging their power.

Baron HENRY DE WORMS: I think I made my views upon this Bill perfectly clear. The reason why the late Law Officers did not carry out the suggestion was that their Government went out of Office.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): It is perfectly clear now why the Government abstained, as long as they possibly could, from taking part in the discussion upon this Bill. We have just listened to a remarkable speech from the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson). What did he say? Drawing a distinction between the action and the policy of England and that of other nations, he said — "We have thrown our ports open to the Navies of the world." Are we to be told that the people of England are now going to turn their backs on that policy? Because that is what the statement of the right hon. Baronet amounted to. He said—"We have thrown our ports open to the Navies of the world;" and the inevitable conclusion to be arrived at is, that now restrictions are to be placed upon the freedom of the ports of England because foreign nations have not imitated the example of England. Why has England thrown her ports open? Because she thought it would pay. And I should like to know whether we are to be told to-day that the experiences of free and open ports is a bad thing? The proposition is manifestly absurd. It is quite evident to me that this Bill has been introduced in the interest of some extremely narrow clique, and that it is a measure which would inevitably lead to bad feeling between England and foreign nations, and would unquestionably, if it were passed at this hour of the night (2.25), be repealed in the course of a year or two.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) (who was met by cries of "Divide!") said: I wish to give both the Government and hon. Gentlemen who cry "Divide!" clear notice that some of us are determined to oppose this Bill far beyond the present Motion. I shall use the Forms of the House to postpone the consideration of this measure until the House is full, and the Press and the country can thoroughly understand the provisions of the Bill. Nothing has made me so strong against this Bill as the speeches delivered from the Treasury Bench. One very remarkable argument was advanced by an hon. Gentleman opposite. He said that—

> "Foreign pilots are allowed to gain a knowledge of our ports and our rivers which would be most perilous to us in time of war."

Does the hon. Gentleman seriously put before an Assembly of reasonable men an argument like that in favour of a Bill of this kind? The hon. Gentleman had better go to school and learn something about the art of war; because if the hon. Gentleman knew anything about the art of war, he would know very well that in the pigeon-holes of all the War and Naval Offices of any Power which might come into any conflict with us there are perfectly clear and accurate maps of every single river and port in this country. Do hon. Gentlemen seriously think that foreign countries would be prevented from making war on this country because of the want of knowledge? I never heard a more grotesque or childish argument. What is the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson)? The right hon. Gentleman was under the impression that his speech would have the effect of facilitating the progress of the Bill by removing misapprehension. I can only assure the right hon. Gentleman that his removal of any misapprehension with regard to the Bill will seriously impede the progress of the Bill, because the right hon. Gentleman made a confession with almost infantine frankness. He mentioned the Flushing Company, the masters of which would continue to have power of piloting their own vessels, and he said if they exercised the power they would be saved £12,000 a-year. Well, but the right hon. Gentleman has just established our whole case. That means that this Bill will fine the Flushing Company £12,000 a-year. What did the right hon. Gentleman say? He said that the present holders of these certificates would have their rights respected; but when the question was interjected from this side of the House, whether their successors would have the same rights, the right hon. Gentleman answered in the negative, and the consequence is that the escape of the Flushing Company from a fine of £12,000 a-year depends on the longevity of the existing masters.

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to explain what I meant to say. Of course, under the Bill, masters who have not previously held certificates will not secure them; but a Dutch steamer may be free of pilotage up the Thames, if it has a British officer holding a certificate on board.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I wonder for what purpose the right hon. Gentleman got up to correct my statement, because his explanation, instead of being a contradiction, is a confirmation of my statement. Of course, a Flushing steamer would have the right to employ a British pilot. If the Dutch Company would oblige us by not employing a master of its own nationality, but of our nationality, it would escape the fine you desire to put upon it. That is to say, while we, on the one hand, are putting a penal enactment against the Dutch masters, the Dutch masters are obliging us in return by adopting the penal enactment against themselves, and employing a British master. A more grotesque proposition I never heard. We are fighting for a principle in this matter. I do not care what exceptions the Government may make. I do not care what vested rights they may respect. We mean to fight this matter, whether it refers to one man or to 10 men, or whether it refers to one class of men or to another class of men. We mean to fight it as a question of principle, and as a most dangerous interference with the best and beneficent traditions of the commercial policy of this country. I imagine hon. Gentlemen opposite have never read the history of the Navigation Laws of this country. Under the old Navigation Laws, the principle which is small in this Bill was represented in every part of our commerce. It was impossible under those laws to have any but English sailors and any but English masters, and the great and gigantic increase of our commerce dates from the abolition of those laws, and the abolition of all the miserable, narrow, bigoted, and reactionary principles embodied in those laws. Why, the country would be up in arms if they knew the principles of this Bill. What did the Government say in regard to this Bill? The hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) is a Liverpool Representative. At the last Election in Liverpool the cry was raised, not by me, but by some persons against the present Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), because of the action of the Government in regard to the mails. What was his defence? He said the Government had a right, on the principles of Free Trade, to get their work done by anybody, provided it was done with economy and efficiency, and in that the right hon. Gentleman was quite right. Although I was a bitter opponent of the right hon. Gentleman, I entirely sympathized with the doctrine he laid down in this matter. He said it was a degradation of politics to be raising the question of foreign and native labour on a question of that kind. Now, another Member of the Government, also a Member for Liverpool (Baron Henry De Worms) gets up and reverses this process, and now adopts that doctrine of favour shown to native over foreign labour, which his superior and his Colleague repudiated as the degradation of politics. I quite agree with an hon. Friend of mine, who has said that if you start this principle you cannot stop at pilots. Why do you give native pilots advantages over foreign pilots, and refuse to give native clerks advantages over German clerks? Thousands of clerks in London complain, and I sympathize with them to a very great extent, that their wages are reduced by the incursion into the country of German clerks, who are able to work for smaller wages, because they are able to live on more frugal diet. Will not the English clerks, if this Bill passes, have a perfectly unanswerable case in favour of giving them preference over German clerks? Unquestionably, the same principle which gives a preference to native pilots should give a preference to native clerks. Does anyone in his senses suppose that other nations will not retaliate upon us for conduct like this? There are no men in the world who have more to fear from the system of Protection to native over foreign labour than Englishmen. There is scarcely a country in the world where English capital is not employed, where Englishmen are not employed, where Englishmen do not superintend great commercial enterprizes. Under this Bill you prevent a German master piloting his own vessel. Suppose Germans say they will no longer have gasworks which are kept up by Englishmen. Suppose the Spanish people were to refuse to allow the mines of Spain to be entirely worked by English capital. I say that this is a monstrous principle, a principle not only reactionary in regard to England, but in regard to the whole world. I do not know what the idea of hon. Gentlemen opposite may be in regard to the future; but my idea of the future is that nations should be joined together in the bonds of sympathy and open to all. ["Oh!"] I know that hon. Gentlemen opposite do not care for bonds of sympathy, and I ought to apologize for mentioning them before Gentlemen of the Party opposite; but, unfortunately, the Party opposite plays a large part in the world's history. My idea of the future is evidently not such as that of some other hon. Gentlemen. Let every nation devote its labour to that which is best able to produce good results, and let the labour of all nations go to the commonwealth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Before we go to a Division I should like some further explanations from Her Majesty's Government. I see my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) in his place. Now I have a great deal of faith in his advice and in his sound common sense, and I appeal to him to use his good offices with his Colleagues to induce them to agree to this Motion, in order that the consideration of the measure may be postponed to a more opportune occasion. I confess I am alarmed by the last speech delivered from the Treasury Bench. Why, the heresy is spreading. In the first place, we had it from the Secretary to the Board of Trade that this would be retaliation. Now it has cropped up in a more dangerous form. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) has put, in the most naked form, the adoption of this principle of retaliation. He points to the fact that we do not receive the same consideration from other nations which we show to them. I hope that there is a determination on this side of the House, however, to stand by the decision taken up. It is impossible that this Bill can be allowed to go forth. It is a reversal, in most important respects, of the well-established principles of the country. The Bill has not been discussed as to its principle; and I hope, at any rate, we shall receive an assurance that some time will be allowed for the consideration of the principle involved in the Bill.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I certainly support the appeal of my hon. Friend (Mr. Illingworth), and hope the Government will listen to us, and allow us to report Progress. When this Bill was brought on by the Member for Central Hull (Mr. King) it appeared a very small and insignificant matter. We certainly did not expect to find that it embodied such an important principle as we now find it to contain. Not very long before the consideration of the Bill came on, the hon. Member for Hull himself moved that the House be counted, and at that time the Benches opposite were absolutely empty. My hon. Friend the Member for the Launceston Division of Cornwall (Mr. C. T. D. Acland) called attention to the nature of the Bill, pointing out that what was really involved was not a small question, but the very large question of Protection, and the progress of the debate has clearly shown he was justified in that assumption. I appeal to Her Majesty's Government whether it is a reasonable request that so large and important a question as Protection should be discussed at 20 minutes to 3 o'clock in the morning, after there has been an attempt made by the hon. Member in charge of the Bill to count the House, and when there is not a Cabinet Minister present? I hardly know who to appeal to. Certainly, this is a question which ought not to be discussed in the absence of the Leader of the House, or, at all events, of some Member of the Cabinet. I trust we shall now be allowed to report Progress.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): That is exactly what hon. Gentlemen on these Benches wish to do. If the hon. Gentleman's (Mr. Acland's) Motion is defeated we will allow Progress to be reported.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE: I understand that, when the captains of the Flushing Company die, that Company will be fined £12,000 a-year. Will the Government say whether I understand the position correctly?

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I do not think that hon. Gentlemen opposite wish to put us to the trouble of a Division. [Sir ROBERT FOWLER: Yes.] I was not speaking to the hon. Gentleman the late Lord Mayor of London, but to the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir John Gorst), who made an offer just now which, as I understand it, is that the Government will agree to report Progress. What is the advantage of putting us to the trouble of a Division when, immediately afterwards, the Government will agree to the alternative method of postponement? I would suggest that the Motion "That the Chairman leave the Chair," which, of course, if carried, would be fatal to the Bill, be withdrawn.

SIR JOHN GORST: I think there is very little difference between us. We are agreed that the present Motion is to be defeated. If that is done, the Government will agree to the Motion to report Progress.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): There is some objection to the course suggested. We consider that this Bill must be debated, and debated before a full House. We hope to extract still more information from the Government. We hope to get definite answers upon points which they have not yet cleared up, and which we do not care to go into now. I think it is reasonable that my hon. Friend (Mr. Acland) should be allowed to withdraw his Motion that you, Sir, leave the Chair. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] If hon. Gentlemen will be kind enough to hear me out, they can express their dissent afterwards. I think it is reasonable that my hon. Friend should be allowed to withdraw his Motion, and that Progress should then be reported. The adoption of such a course will not prejudice the case at all.

SIR JOSEPH PEASE: Hon. Gentlemen opposite seem anxious to go to a Division in order to prove their majority. Some of us do not doubt their majority. We have discussed this question in a very quiet and amicable spirit—the Bill has its merits and its demerits—and I do not see much use in going to a Division upon a Motion which can be withdrawn.

MR. C. T. D. ACLAND: I beg to ask leave to withdraw the Motion. ["No, no!"]

MR. JOICEY: Many Members of the House who are shipowners are away. Surely this is a Bill which ought not to be discussed in their absence. This is a very important matter—it concerns the whole shipping interest; and I feel sure there are many shipowners absent from the opposite Benches who will go against the Bill. Although hon. Gentlemen opposite have a majority to-night, it is improbable they will have a majority when the Bill comes on again.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): We know what the object of the Government is; but I do not believe that their defeating the Motion before the Committee will have the smallest effect on the future vote which will be given on this Bill. I suppose a Division is to be forced on simply to gratify hon. Members who have sat here for all these hours in order to pass the Bill. That does not seem to me a fair way of carrying on a battle of this kind. ["Oh!"] No; it does not. There is not the smallest doubt that not one Member in 10 in this House had the slightest notion that this Bill was coming on to-night. It is not usual, when it is discovered that there is a strong opposition to a Bill, to insist on forcing on a Division, with a view of getting what looks like an advantage in a declaration in favour of the principle of that Bill. If hon. Members had been in a more reasonable spirit—["Oh, oh!"] Well, it is preposterous to think that we are going to allow this Bill to pass, when we know that, by taking the proper means to secure its being discussed in a full House, we shall be able to test its principle fully, and probably be able to defeat it. Hon. Members, if they had been reasonable, would have got home, and would have enabled us to get home, two hours ago. They should have known, from experience, that it is legitimate and usual for the opponents of a Bill to take this well-known method of preventing a Bill of this kind, which comes on unexpectedly, from being pressed on in a thin and almost deserted House. Everyone expected that the House would be counted out to-night; consequently, a great many Members of influence left. No doubt they would have remained had they dreamed of the possibility of this measure coming on.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan, W.): I should like to say one word to hon. Gentlemen opposite, who seem anxious to have a very late Sitting, and to inconvenience the great body of hon. Members present. I would point out that the course they are taking always tells more against the majority than the minority. If 40 Members on this side, and 80 on the opposite side, have been put to inconvenience, the inconvenience has been greater there than here. I always like to have a few points in my favour, and if I were hon. Gentlemen opposite I should not like to gamble when the points are two to one against me. I would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite to reflect that they will be inconvenienced a great deal more, and still in the same proportion, by wasting further time on this precious Bill. So far as I am personally concerned, I have not suffered much inconvenience. I had rather a long sleep on the Benches, and am quite prepared to go into the Division Lobby. I think, however, that as the matter is in our favour, so far as the point of inconvenience is concerned, hon. Members opposite would do well to allow the Committee stage of the Bill to be postponed.

SIR JOHN GORST: I hope hon. Gentlemen opposite will think me reasonable and earnest in my desire to get the House out of a difficulty. It must be obvious to them that this Motion, "That the Chairman do now leave the Chair" cannot be withdrawn. ["Why?"] Because there are a considerable number of Members on this side who will not allow it to be withdrawn. Hon. Members are perfectly aware that one single Member can prevent a Motion being withdrawn. I am appealing to the reason of hon. Members opposite. It must be quite obvious to them that there is more than one person on this side who will not permit the withdrawal of the Motion. It must, therefore, be disposed of by a Division. If hon. Gentlemen wish to avoid a Division, they can do so by not challenging the Chairman's decision, if he says "The Noes have it." If they do not challenge him, then the "Noes" will have it, and the Motion will fall to the ground, and Progress can then be reported.

MR. CONYBEARE: If the Chairman should say, "The Ayes have it," are we to take it that his decision will not be challenged? [*Cries of* "Divide!"] If you are so anxious to have a Division, do not forget that we have good memories on this side of the House, and that it is just possible that, on another occasion, we may have more than one Division.

MR. MURPHY: The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite (Sir John Gorst) pointed out to hon. Members on this side of the House that if only one Member on the other side challenges a Division, a Division will have to be taken. I would suggest to him that he should use his influence with the supporters of the Government to get them to assent unanimously to the withdrawal of the Motion.

Question put.

The Committee *divided*:—Ayes 35; Noes 60.

The Tellers reported the Numbers as Ayes 35; Noes 60:—

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I rise to a point of Order before the Tellers leave the Table. I wish to ask if the return they have made includes the vote of the hon. Gentleman representing the South-Eastern Division of Lancashire (Mr. Maclure), who was in the Lobby, and was not allowed to pass through? I see the hon. Gentleman now entering the House from behind the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN: The matter must be explained before the Tellers retire.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR, rising: [An hon. MEMBER: Sit with your hat on.] I understand I must address you, Mr. Courtney, seated, with my hat on. I desire to inform you that the hon. Member to whom I have referred entered the "Aye" Lobby; that, as he was about to pass through, one of the Gentlemen connected with the Party opposite prevented him from doing so in the ordinary way, and compelled him to go back, and now I see he has entered the House from behind the Chair. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether he should not be required to pass through the Lobby in the ordinary way, and then ask to have his vote removed from the "Ayes," on the ground that he has voted in the wrong Lobby? I ask the Tellers if the statement I have made is not correct?

THE CHAIRMAN (to Mr. MACLURE): The hon. Gentleman will please come to the Table.

MR. MACLURE accordingly came to the Table.

THE CHAIRMAN: Was the hon. Member in the House when the Question was put?

MR. MACLURE made no reply.

An hon. MEMBER: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Was the hon. Member in the House?

MR. MACLURE: No, Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the Lobby?

MR. MACLURE: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then he must be counted in the Lobby in which he was.

The ASSISTANT CLERK made a communication to the Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am told my declaration is wrong. The hon. Gentleman was in the Lobby, and not in the House, and did not hear the Question put.

MR. MACLURE: No; I did not hear the Question put.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. Gentleman is not entitled to vote.

The Numbers were then declared from the Chair, as reported by the Tellers, viz.: — Ayes 35; Noes 60: Majority 25.—(Div. List, No. 94.)

The following is the Entry in the Votes:—

The Tellers reported the Numbers as Ayes 35, Noes 60:—

Notice taken that Mr. Maclure, Member for the N. E. Division of Lancashire, had been in the Division Lobby with the Ayes, but had not Voted:—

Whereupon the Chairman directed the honourable Member to come to the Table:—

Mr. Maclure, having come to the Table, stated that he had been in the Lobby, and had not heard the Question put:—

The Chairman thereupon informed the honourable Member that he was not entitled to vote:—

And declared the Numbers as reported by the Tellers, viz., Ayes 35, Noes 60.

MR. M. J. KENNY: On the point of Order I wish to say——

THE CHAIRMAN: The point of Order is settled.

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): I beg to move, Sir, that you do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Jackson,*) —put, and *agreed to.*

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon *Thursday* next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

CUSTOMS AND INLAND REVENUE BILL.

Resolution [April 21] *reported,* and *agreed to:* Bill *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

LIMITED OWNERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Select Committee on Limited Owners (Scotland) Bill *nominated* of,—Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Mr. J. B. Balfour, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Elton, Sir Herbert Maxwell, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. M'Lagan, Mr. Mark Stewart, Mr. Chance, and Mr. Haldane.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Haldane.*)

House adjourned at Three o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 25th April, 1887.

MINUTES.]—PUBLIC BILLS—*First Reading*—Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension) * (69).

Second Reading — Hyde Park Corner (New Streets) * (64); Land Transfer (57).

LAND TRANSFER BILL.—(No. 57.)

(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Moved "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

LORD ARUNDELL OF WARDOUR, in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said, he had put the Notice of Amendment on the Paper after much reluctance and hesitation; but he thought it inconsistent with the dignity of their Lordships' House that that which they had always regarded as the keystone of their institutions should be taken out and cast away without a word of protest. The question of primogeniture was one which nearly touched and vitally affected the estates and families of every individual Peer in that House. As far as this Bill tended to increase the number of freehold holdings he wished it success; but he thought that by abolishing primogeniture they were undoing with one hand what they were attempting on the other to do by legislation, because without primogeniture a freehold would not remain in a family. It might be said that it could be arranged by will that the holding should go to any particular son; but for people of small means the expense of a will would always be a consideration, and he thought that when this Bill came to be properly understood it would not be so acceptable to those whom it affected as seemed to be supposed. The attempt by the promoters of this Bill to put real property on the same footing with personal property was a sop to the Cerberus of Socialism. There would come a time, if proposals of this kind were encouraged, when the party of destruction would strive to abolish the cherished liberty of that bequest. He believed that it would be a great mistake to reduce the different sorts of property to a common denomination, and feared that the Bill would be tantamount to a sentence of death and extinction for many ancient families. He would almost prefer uniform and direct appropriation with compensation rather than have this sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of all the important families of England. It was mere mockery to say that the Bill was not compulsory, because it became practically so at death. He moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Amendment *moved*, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Arundell of Wardour.*)

The Duke of MARLBOROUGH said, England was the only country in Europe where the State was not the fountain of title. In every other country there existed some form of land registration. In England the title to land depended upon a deed which was a private memorandum between parties. This deed recorded the transactions which had taken place from generation to generation, and which had their origin in a grant from the Crown. The title to land in England was essentially feudal in its origin. That was an important fact to remember, because in dealing with titles to real property they were interfering with one of the most ancient monuments in the Kingdom—one of those few monuments which had not been touched by the ruthless ravages of democratic spoliation. He admitted that he thought the time had come when this question must be dealt with, and he hailed with great pleasure the advent of this Bill. He gathered that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack had endeavoured to average the best opinion on this subject. Among the minor provisions of the measure he recognized a certain strong similitude to provisions contained in the Bill which he himself introduced in 1885. As yet, in considering the question of the registration of land, they had never ventured to lay aside the old notion of tenure by deed. If a measure of registration was ever to be successful it must enable them to put their deeds behind the fire. This condition was not fulfilled by the Bill before the House, and he feared that it would therefore fail to secure cheapness and facility of transfer. The 1st clause of the Bill stated that a Registration Office would be established, and that as time went on other offices would be established elsewhere. It seemed to him that that was an inadequate provision. The machinery of registration ought to be perfect and complete before the contemplated change was begun. Partial efforts could only result in confusion. As the Bill stood considerable difficulties might arise with respect to the registration of land on the borders of two counties, and solicitors would find it difficult to advise their clients. Some scheme of a more definite and absolute character ought to be incorporated in the Bill. With respect to this and other matters there was great vagueness in the Bill, and far too much was left to be settled in the rules to be issued by the Lord Chancellor from time to time. Then, by Clause 5, it would seem that the names of the trustees must appear on the register, as well as that of the tenant for life. If that was so, the purchaser would be obliged to go behind the register and inquire into the trusts themselves. The noble Marquess at the head of the Government (the Marquess of Salisbury) had said that the law of settlement was one of great value. But did the noble Marquess mean marriage settlements or the settlements of real estate in strict entail? He agreed that settlements *inter vivos* were often useful. But if the Law of Entail was to be touched, ought we not at the same time to do away with the law which permitted the tying up of property for a life, or lives, in being and 21 years after the death of the survivor? In that case it might desirable to give the tenant for life power to buy up the interests of remaindermen and reversioners. With respect to Clause 7, dealing with possessory titles, it might be wise to adopt the system of New South Wales, under which caveats and notices were issued to the adjoining proprietors. Lord Cairns's Act of 1875 was indefinite on the descriptions of boundaries, and the clauses in the present Bill on this matter were unnecessary. He was informed that boundary disputes were of very rare occurrence. In this respect the maps of the Ordnance Survey, now happily approaching completion, would be of great value. Clause 17, relating to the insurance fund, was of an extraordinary character, and this clause, as well as Sub-section 2 of Clause 18, under which the mortgagee had a right to have his name on the register as well as the owner, might give rise to considerable difficulty. Clause 15 provided that there should be an insurance fund for the purpose of compensating persons who might be accidentally wronged by the operation of the Act, and the first schedule set forth the terms of this insurance. Practically, if anybody put land upon the register, got an absolute title for it, and afterwards mortgaged the property, the insurance fee alone would amount to 16*s.* 8*d.* per cent, which was a very heavy charge. He hailed with great pleasure the prospect of having land easily transferred; but he thought that unless the considerations he had placed before their Lordships met with some attention, the present measure might possibly prove to be a failure.

Lord THRING said, he approved the object of the Bill to the fullest possible extent; but he thought that many of its clauses would require Amendment in Committee.

Lord MONTEAGLE of BRANDON said, that he hoped the provisions of the Bill which related to primogeniture and entail would be extended to Ireland. With respect to those which dealt with registration, he thought considerable care would have to be exercised as to the method adopted, having regard to the great changes which had recently taken place and the still greater changes which were now in progress in respect to land in Ireland. There were a considerable number of small holders under Lord Ashbourne's Act, and the Government had in contemplation a large measure to enable or compel tenants to purchase their holdings. But even if that should not pass he would impress upon the Government the advisability of establishing a simple, inexpensive and, if possible, local registry for the purpose of recording the titles acquired under the Acts now in force. He might be told that Parliamentary inquiries had settled the question of registration, but he pointed out that the result of the last of those inquiries was published in 1879, which was prior to the large changes to which he had referred. The small properties which were being created in Ireland were being paid for out of public moneys, and it was therefore very desirable that the title of the State should be as clear and as easily realized as possible. He would, therefore, urge upon the Government to extend, as far as possible, the provisions with regard to primogeniture and entail, and that they should not lose sight of the question of the registration of title.

The LORD CHANCELLOR of IRELAND (Lord Ashbourne) said that, as they had in Ireland the same law of real property as in England, he thought it would be reasonable and right to extend the provisions about divergencies being treated, and to consider carefully the suggested extension of the provisions as to primogeniture and entail to Ireland. As to registration, they had a system in Ireland which had worked well during a long period and which was thoroughly understood. From time to time certain desirable amendments had been pointed out, but those were matters which plainly should be dealt with by separate legislation, and to attempt to deal with them in that Bill would be to add very serious obstacles to its passing. He, however, would be glad to confer with the Lord Chancellor on the subject generally.

The Earl of SELBORNE said, that the perusal of this Bill had confirmed him in the opinion of its value and importance which he had expressed when it was introduced. It dealt in one part with land transfer, and in another with the law of real property. He thought those questions might perhaps have been better dealt with in separate Bills. But that was not a ground upon which he could oppose either part of the Bill. It was, also, very difficult to understand the Bill without having present to one's mind the provisions of the principal enactment to which it throughout referred. He, therefore, thought that after it was passed, if it did pass, no time ought to be lost in consolidating the law, in order that the whole law on the subject might be seen together. On the question of compulsion, he was still of the same opinion as he was in 1873 and 1875. He thought that to make a Bill of that sort useful at all some compulsion was necessary, because experience had shown that people preferred the methods to which they were accustomed, and which they understood, to any mere option to deviate from them. There was an opinion prevalent in the country—he did not say it was altogether well-founded—that the great difficulty of making land profitable arose from the complication of the system under which titles to land were made out. That it could be simplified to the full extent which some people supposed was not certain; but there was no doubt that to simplify it as far as possible there must be a system of registration. They could not in any other way work off the difficulties of title—the preparation and examination of the abstract, the making and answering of requisitions, and so on—which made dealing with land in this country a tedious, an expensive, and, sometimes, a hazardous process. To get rid of the whole of the present difficulties, and to make the transfer of property upon purchase and sale a simple matter, was a very great object indeed; and, although it could not be done all at once, yet the scheme proposed by this Bill for enabling a person who was registered upon a possessory title to go within a limited time and get an absolute title was the only way of doing it, unless they were content to wait for a long period of 20, 30, or 60 years, which would not be so effective or desirable. But, in order to do even that, they must lay a foundation in registry, and it must be a general and compulsory registry. From that point of view it appeared to him that the noble Duke opposite had laid his finger upon a drawback from the perfection of the present Bill — namely, that it did not contemplate a general and simultaneous registry for the whole country, but simply a registry in London, with power for the Crown to establish branch offices in districts to be prescribed and defined from time to time. Until that was done all over the country, they certainly could not have a perfect system. The obstacle in the way of setting up district registries was, of course, that it would cost money; because it was not probable that the registry system, though it might become self-supporting in the end, would be self-supporting at the beginning. He ventured, when he proposed a Bill of this sort in 1873, to take that bull by the horns and to contemplate the establishment of proper offices for the purpose of registry everywhere. The view which he took at that time, although he fully appreciated the difficulties, was this—As to the process of making absolute a Parliamentary title, that could only be done by thoroughly skilled persons, and for that he did not contemplate any but a central office performing that operation. But, with regard to the registry of possessory titles, and the transfer of registered titles, it appeared to him that those gentlemen who were local registrars for other purposes, would be competent to be intrusted also with the duties of a registry office for that purpose; and he did not think that the salary need be anything but a small one. All he could add on that part of the subject was that while he felt that this Bill, or any Bill, must be imperfect until the whole ground was occupied, yet he would rather have a Bill which would begin by covering from time to time such part of the ground as was practicable than none at all; because if it once came into operation, and proved useful in operation, he felt tolerably sure that it would, from time to time, be extended. With regard to the means of compulsion, his own proposition was to apply the compulsion only upon any sale within a short period, and not in those cases in which property came by will or by descent or by any means which had not the character of sale. The present Bill carried the principle of compulsion further, and he was not sure that there were not some difficulties in the means proposed. Until the first registry, after the time fixed, it seemed to be proposed, not only to make all beneficial interests merely equitable, but practically to suspend all the powers of ownership. He was sure that this must be inconvenient, and he did not think it necessary. He now had to observe upon the clauses relating to the representation of settled estates by trustees, and of devised estates by executors. The Bill seemed to assume that there must be trustees of all settlements. But under settlements the persons beneficially entitled generally took legal estates; and trustees were only provided for special purposes, or possible emergencies. He thought the tenant for life, to whose estate a power of sale was now by law annexed, ought to be the registered owner. He was not persuaded of the necessity or the expediency of vesting all devised real estate in executors, and of turning all the rights of the true owners into more equitable estates. Executors, as a rule, were honest men. But unfortunately, as they knew, there were cases in which personal estate was fraudulently appropriated; and under the Bill it might be in the power of one man to sell the estate and go off to America with the proceeds. It was supposed that this would be more convenient for the payment of debts; but, for his own part, he thought that the existing powers of sale given by the law were not so cumbrous or insufficient as to make so large a change necessary. With regard to the question of error or fraud, the Bill declared that—

> "Where a person satisfies the High Court that he has been deprived of any registered land by any forgery or fraud, or by any error of the Land Transfer Board, or any of its officers, the Court may, according as it may think equitable under the circumstances, either order payment of compensation to that person out of the insurance fund, or order that the land shall be restored."

It seemed to him that more definite lines should be laid down for the judgment of the Court in this matter, and he would suggest that the principle should be that where the person registered as owner under a title certified as absolute was in good faith, and free from all imputation of fraud, whether a purchaser for value or not, he should have the land, and that the person whose title would otherwise have been preferable should only recover the land on proof of fraud against the registered owner, and in any case of mere error should be compensated in money. As to mortgagees, he did not think they ought to be allowed to register as owners; they should be entered, in all cases, upon the register of charges, as provided by Lord Cairns' Act. With regard to the question of charges for future advances, Section 20 repealed the law, as declared by their Lordships in the case of "Rolt and Hopkinson." In that case there was a first mortgage, for a definite sum, and any further advances up to a specified amount; notice was given of a second charge after part only of the specified amount had been advanced, after which there were further advances by the first mortgagee up to the full amount. In that case it was held that the second mortgagee had priority over all advances made by the first mortgagee after receiving notice of the second charge. He saw that the proposed reversal of the rule established by that decision was approved by the Incorporated Law Society; but on that point he was unable to agree with them. The rule applied only when the first mortgagees were under no contract to go on making advances. The proposed change in the law would practically place the borrower, whatever his necessities might be, at their mercy. No one else could safely make an advance to him until the maximum amount had been reached; and yet he might be unable to get an advance to that amount from the first mortgagee, or might be able to get it only upon exorbitant and usurious terms. Nobody was hurt by the law as it stood; for the first mortgagees were quite safe, as it was, in going on with their advances until they had notice of the second charge. These were the only points on which he now thought it necessary to observe; and he did so, although they were, in strictness, questions upon particular clauses; because the passing of a Bill of this kind through the stage of Committee might be made easier if ample time were given beforehand for the consideration of criticisms by those who were friendly to its objects. He desired to end as he had begun by congratulating the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack upon having made a great step towards accomplishing a very important object.

Lord HERSCHELL said, he joined in the opinion that great credit was due to the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack for the courage with which he had dealt with this very difficult subject. He would not, however, add that he congratulated him until the result of this measure was seen, for such congratulations had in the past been very premature, and he did not wish to add to the list of false prophets. In such observations as he should make, his object would be to render such assistance as he could to the noble and learned Lord. This Bill was an Amendment Bill and was to be read with the Act of 1875. Now, this might be regarded as a matter of drafting, but it was really a very important point. No one by reading this measure after it was passed could tell what the law on the subject exactly would be. It would be necessary to refer to the Act of 1875, and the Schedules of that Act, and compare the two together. He should have thought that it would be better to treat the whole subject in one Bill as an entirely new scheme. The Act of 1875 had been a failure, and this Bill would, he thought, have a better chance of success if it was treated as a wholly separate measure. The Bill, as had been pointed out, dealt in one part with changes in the Law of Real Property and changes in land transfer and registration. The changes in the Law of Real Property consisted in the abolition of the Law of Inheritance and of estates tail. He need hardly say that he approved of the abolition of the Law of Inheritance. This would not prevent any man devising his estate to his eldest son if he chose to do so. This change in the law would not, he thought, touch most of those cases in which estates were now usually entailed, but it would prevent a great deal of injustice being done in those cases in which the owner died without making a will, but in which if he had made a will he would have divided his real property. What was the most just dispensation of a man's property where he did not make a will? The law had already decided this point in regard to personal property, and he did not see why the same rules as to distribution should not prevail with regard to real estate. The Bill, he noticed, provided that a life estate should be given to the husband or wife. But he did not approve of this. He had an objection to life estates generally; but irrespective of this he did not think that it would be fair to the children that the widow should have a life estate, and that the property should only be sold and divided on her death. Nor did he see why this difference should be made between freehold and leasehold property—that the widow of one man who had possessed freehold property should have a life estate in it after his death, while the widow of a man who held leasehold should not. He altogether approved of that part of the Bill which abolished estates tail. There was, however, danger of public misapprehension on this point. Some persons might be held to suppose that this would stop the "tying up of land." The abolition of estates tail would have very little effect on the tying up of land. One of the great barriers to the diffusion of land was the existence of tenants for life in relation to so large a portion of the land of the country. He attached great importance to the diffusion of land for many reasons, one of which was, that he believed that no property was really safe unless it had for its support the self-interest of a great number of people. He remembered being much impressed, when a Member of the House of Commons, by the answer of a Conservative Member who voted for the Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill, and who, when asked why he approved of so revolutionary a measure, remarked—"Well, you see, I want to buy my house in such and such a street." Even among respectable and staid Conservatives, most of them were leaseholders, and freeholders were few. If the number of freeholders were increased the security of freehold property would thereby also be increased. The system of life estates was responsible for several evils; it often, for example, put obstacles in the way of the transfer and purchase of land which it was desirable to sell. When a tenant for life was made bankrupt, the estate, instead of being sold, was worked for the benefit of the creditors, and, too often, was "starved." He recognized that in the present state of public opinion upon the subject the law could not be altered so as to prohibit altogether the creation of life tenancies, but might not some limitation be introduced? For instance, might not the power be limited to the creation of life estates for children? It was supposed by many people that the Settled Land Act had removed all grounds for criticism adverse to the system of life estates, but the supposition was not well founded. A tenant for life who sold under the Act was compelled to invest the purchase-money in certain specified securities. The consequence was that a tenant refrained from selling when the land yielded more than would be obtained from these investments. Then when a tenant became bankrupt the estate passed to the assignee; the tenant, of course, had no inducement to sell, and the assignee could not. Would it not be wise to permit the sale of the estate by the assignee in cases of that kind? Another reason why tenants did not avail themselves in greater numbers of the Settled Land Act would be found in the provision rendering necessary a special order of Court before the mansion-house and demesne could be sold. The mere fact that an application to the Court was necessary deterred many tenants from selling. Another point to which attention might be turned with advantage was the present power of accumulation. A testator could direct that accumulation should continue for a period of 21 years. Such directions seldom effected any useful purpose and were often mischievous. With regard to the proposed change in the system of land transfer, he was strongly of opinion that if it was to be compulsory they ought to make it cheap. If it were said that it could not be made cheap for the landowner without imposing some burden on the public, the answer would be that if registration were made compulsory in the interest of the public it was but fair that the public should bear part of the burden. In order that they might form an opinion as to the best mode of introducing the change it was very desirable that they should be furnished with information with respect to the experience of foreign countries. He hoped, therefore, that they would be supplied without delay with Reports showing how the system was established in Prussia in 1872 and in Hungary. He believed that in Hungary the work had been done by temporary Commissions, and that it had been done rapidly and at little cost. With reference to the question of boundaries, he might illustrate the difficulties which arose in this connection by a case of two adjoining farms which were settled in 1820 or 1821, as to the boundaries of which difficulties arose 35 years after the settlement, difficulties which had to be decided by conflicting statutory declarations of old inhabitants, and were finally settled by giving half the disputed property to one claimant and half to another. With respect to the insurance fund—which in principle he heartily approved—the question arose, in the case of a person being on the register who was not the true owner, whether the land ought to be restored to the true owner, while compensation was given to the person on the register, or *vice versâ*? In his judgment restitution was the right principle, and compensation to the person wrongfully entered on the register. On this occasion a careful attempt ought to be made to settle once for all this most complicated question. We had the failures of the past to warn us, and we had the benefit of past experience. He trusted that the noble Marquess opposite would do his best to procure the Report from Vienna, and that the Bill would not be proceeded with before that Report was received.

Lord BRAMWELL said, he thought that his noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack had scarcely done himself justice by calling this a Land Transfer Bill, since he has shown his courage and wisdom in dealing boldly with some of the antiquated doctrines and practices of our Real Property Law. The substance of this Bill was a right measure. In reference to the Insurance Fund, he thought the right principle to go upon was that the person who was truly entitled to the property should be allowed to enjoy it, and that the person who had wrongly got upon the register should have the money compensation.

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): I shall feel obliged to the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) if he would kindly furnish me with the dates of the laws in Austria-Hungary, about which he desires the Government to obtain information. The noble and learned Lord has taken advantage of this Bill to deliver an attack upon a matter not contained in it—namely, the existing laws of settlement in this country. It is in reference to what he said that I wish to make a few remarks. It seems to me that the noble and learned Lord's remarks had reference to more vulgar arguments than I should have expected from one in his high position, and that he descended to the commonplaces of the platform instead of using the lucid and legal arguments with which the rest of his speech was adorned. In the first place, he told us that it was necessary to abolish settlements in estates because of the importance of promoting the diffusion of land; and he dwelt very strongly on the political support which the diffusion of property in land would give to that kind of property. The noble and learned Lord illustrated his contention with a story of his experience in the House of Commons, which I believe contains a very true moral, when he practically intimated that the case for the Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill really depends on the fact that certain Members of the House of Commons who support that measure are leaseholders under the Duke of Westminster. It is not often that you have to deal with Members of the House of Commons who are concerned as a class in questions of this kind; but when you talk of the value of the diffusion of property for maintaining the principle of property you mean the diffusion of small quantities among large masses. I entirely concur in that view of the noble and learned Lord. It is, I believe, one of the greatest advantages to have a large diffusion of land among small holders, and it is a misfortune that in this country we have, to a certain extent—though not to so great an extent as is supposed—lost that advantage. But does the noble and learned Lord really believe that the abolition of the practice of settlement in the families who ordinarily practise it will produce any great diffusion of land among the masses of this country? If a man wants to sell little bits of land he can do it now. The noble and learned Lord says, however, that a man has no temptation to do it, because he may invest his money in more lucrative securities; but that consideration does not apply to the sale of small pieces of land. That sale is as unrestrained as it is ever likely to be. If you abolish settlements you might—although I have my doubts whether you would—produce a greater diffusion of land among proprietors of a more moderate size; but the number of them would be exceedingly small when the whole sum was taken, and you would produce no effect whatever on the diffusion of land among those people whose possession of it would give it a real political security, and it is very doubtful to my mind whether you would produce the diffusion at all. If the tendency of land is to mass and to get into aggregation, the more easy you make the transfer of land from one man to another the more that tendency will work. If the tendency of land is to diffuse, no doubt such alterations of the law as are proposed by the noble and learned Lord would have a certain effect in diffusing it. But if, as I believe, the tendency of land will always be to get itself into few hands—because land is an unremunerative investment, and therefore must, to a certain extent, be the investment of rich men—for that reason the more you make it easy for land to pass from hand to hand the more you may expect it on the whole to get into fewer hands. I think this matter of the settlement of land has suffered in the discussion, because it has been dealt with so much by the lawyers and so little by landowners. The noble and learned Lord seems to think that the main effect of the abolition of settlement would be to promote the sale of land; and he appeared to be inspired with an idea which is very common to arguers of his school, that all the landowners of this country are bursting with a desire to sell their land, and that it is nothing but the law which prevents them from doing so. I do not believe that that is the working of settlement at all. I do not believe that the landowners of this country do desire to sell their land. On the contrary, I think the sentiment of the landowners is very strongly to keep their lands, and often when economically they ought to sell it; but what every landowner some time in his life desires to do is to mortgage his land, and that is what is prevented by the present law of settlement. One great benefit which the system of settlement has conferred upon this country is that it has restrained the tendency to mortgage land, which is so terrible an evil in every part of the world. Nothing injures the management of land so much as the fact that it is under heavy mortgage. The noble and learned Lord said very justly that a man who was embarrassed did not do justice to his land; but remove the settlement and you remove the greatest hindrance to the embarrassment that exists and increase the temptation to mortgage. My belief is, therefore, that so far from increasing the number of men who are in a position to do justice to their land and to manage it liberally and successfully, by abolishing the law of settlement, you will, on the contrary, diminish the number very largely. The noble and learned Lord seemed to gloat over the idea of a ruined landowner being forced to sell his land. I do not believe that that would be an improvement on the present state of things. I believe the existence of the law and practice of settlement discourages creditors from lending to extravagant owners of land, who consequently are forced to be more economical than they otherwise would be, and the result and consequence is—though Heaven knows we have plenty of scandals of great ruin and extravagance—we should have ten times more of these scandals if the practice of settlement ceased. It might tend to the diffusion of land, or it might not, but I would ask the noble and learned Lord to consider whether it would be a moral advantage? There is nothing in a community which depends so much on the influence of fashion as the extent to which extravagance is considered to be a virtue, and fashion is almost entirely in the hands of the upper classes in England. If you make the upper classes extravagant and unthrifty, extravagance and unthrift will become the fashion, and the fatal poison will spread. I believe that the practice of settlement in enforcing a considerable amount of thrift upon those who set the fashion and give the tone in matters of expenditure, has been a real benefit to the country; and I cannot imagine any greater evil than that the wealthier classes in this country should be utterly unfettered in times of extravagance and moments of temptation, and be able to set an example which would be fatal to the virtue and prosperity of the country.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HALSBURY): I cannot pass by without observation, one or two words which fell from the noble Lord who moved the Amendment. It is, I admit, somewhat refreshing to me to hear myself described as a revolutionary legislator, and as the author of a popularity-hunting Bill. I return my thanks to the noble Lord for discovering the peculiarity which he is good enough to attribute to me. I do not believe that the law of inheritance has any very important bearing upon the devolution of real property, but it certainly does present considerable difficulties in the way of the verification of title, and particularly in the registration of it. Consequently an alteration ought to be made for the great purpose of establishing a register which will facilitate the disposition of land, and not for the purpose to which the noble Lord referred. The noble Duke (the Duke of Marlborough), whose interest in the discussion appears to have passed away, has suggested that the expense of the new system will be greater than that which exists at present. I do not know whether the noble Duke has ever considered what the expense is, not of selling a whole estate, but of selling a piece of an estate. On each occasion when you sell a piece of an estate the whole process has to be gone through again, and the same cost incurred. On one occasion I acted as an arbitrator with regard to the costs to be paid by a landed proprietor to his solicitor, and I found that in a very large number of cases pieces of land had been sold, and that the expenses claimed amounted pretty nearly to the value of the fee-simple of the estate. It is that scandal which renders it necessary that some system of land registration should be adopted. On each occasion when you sell one part of the land exactly the same process has to be gone over which is necessary on a sale of the whole estate. Of course, each purchaser of a part is entitled to have just as thorough an investigation of the title as a purchaser of the whole. It is only necessary to say that you can by a series of small transfers make the costs of transfer equal to the fee-simple of the land in order to show that an alteration in the law is urgently demanded. Many of the speeches which have been made have dealt with matters which will be more properly considered in the stage of Committee. There is, however, one question of principle upon which I will say a few words. Reference has been made to the skeleton or outlying character of the Bill. It must be observed that it is absolutely essential in continuing a system or scheme under which the Bill is to be worked that you should leave a great deal to rules and to persons who are to work the Bill under those rules. The noble Duke, who dealt with this point, appears to have omitted to notice that all those rules are subject to the approval of Parliament. They are to be laid before Parliament, and are capable of being disaffirmed by Resolution of either House. With regard to the general diffusion of the system all over the country, I am not indisposed, considering the mode in which this Bill has been debated, to set one class of objectors against the other. There is at the present moment an actual land register in this country. There are 380 land tax districts in which every yard of land is measured and recorded in the books of the Land Tax Commissioners. If it were desired to bring all the land at once under the Bill, it would be necessary—as has been pointed out to your Lordships—to have an enormous staff in order that the titles in the first instance should be examined by fit and competent persons, and it is not only the expense, but, as I think, the unmanageable nature of such an enormous staff that renders such a plan impracticable; whereas, if the system which I recommend should be ultimately resolved upon, a proper preliminary investigation must be made by persons with something like an intimate knowledge of what the estates consist of before the Order in Council is obtained creating the land transfer district. After that district is proclaimed your whole staff may apply themselves to that district, and afterwards it will be mere clerical work, which can be directed from the central London office. My Lords, it seems to me that that is a most important provision, not only with reference to the expense, but also with reference to the ability of the staff to cope with what would otherwise be the gigantic magnitude of the task which would be thrown upon it. With reference to the alterations which it appears to me are expedient at all events, in the law of real property, if I attempted to do something beyond what I have done the fate of this Bill might not be what I hope for it. I have only to return my most hearty thanks to my noble and learned Friends who have contributed so many valuable suggestions, and I need not say that every suggestion they have made will receive earnest and careful consideration. The passing of this Bill will only be possible if I receive their generous assistance, and the benefit of their learning and experience. I quite agree that the mode in which one Act of Parliament refers to another—and then in that other Statute you are referred to yet another, and so on—is a great scandal, and I believe it has led to the greatest difficulty in understanding and interpreting the law. But I fear that, if I had added the Act of 1875—which contains 127 clauses—to this Bill of 57 clauses, its passage through Parliament would not have been facilitated. But this I will say on the part of the Government—that if this Bill should pass I certainly should immediately introduce a Consolidation Bill. I am far from under-rating the value of such a consolidation of the law, but, looking at the Parliamentary difficulties, I do not think it desirable to attempt it in this Bill. I hope to convince the noble Lord who moved this Amendment that my object was really to amend the state of the law, and not to get a Party advantage, and I trust he will give us credit for a desire to facilitate the transfer of land, and not to get a cheap popularity.

Amendment (by leave of the House) *withdrawn.*

Original Motion *agreed to;* and Bill read 2ª accordingly.

House adjourned at a quarter before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 25*th April,* 1887.

MINUTES.] — PRIVATE BILL (*by Order*) — *Third Reading* — Bexley Heath Railway*, and *passed.*

PUBLIC BILLS — *Ordered* — *First Reading* — Intermediate Education (Wales) * [235].

Second Reading—Referred to Select Committee— Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment* [205].

Considered as amended—Customs Consolidation Act (1876) Amendment * [155].

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS—*First Reading* — Local Government (Ireland) (Limerick Water) * [234].

Third Reading—Local Government * [216], and *passed.*

PRIVILEGE.

PRIVILEGE—PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE—A BOGUS PETITION,

RESOLUTION.

Leave given to the Select Committee on Public Petitions to make a Special Report.

Special Report *brought up,* and read as followeth :—

Special Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions.

Your Committee have from time to time published, for the information of Members, the Orders and Practice of the House which regulate the framing and presentation of Public Petitions. Amongst other Rules is the following :—

Every Petition must be signed by the parties whose names are appended thereto, by their names or marks, and by no one else, except in case of incapacity by sickness.

Your Committee, whenever instances of the disregard of this Order have come under their notice, have reported them to the House, but they observe with regret that, in spite of such publicity, Petitions more or less in contravention of this Rule are frequently presented.

Your Committee have this day under their consideration a Petition in which the violation of this Rule is so marked that they feel bound to report the same to the House.

It is headed "The Humble Petition of Ratepayers of Haggerston," and its Prayer is in favour of the Bill for the Continuance of the London Coal and Wine Duties.

Your Committee observe that upon the sheet containing the Prayer of the Petition there is one signature which appears to be authentic, but all the subsequent names, the whole number being 449, appear to your Committee to be in the handwriting of two or three persons, who have afterwards smeared the signatures with ink, and adopted means to render them difficult to read, and therefore less likely to be detected.

Your Committee consider that the affixture to a Petition of a large number of names, purporting to be those of persons seeking redress from this House, such names being appended by some other persons than the presumed Petitioners, is calculated to mislead the House as to the character of the Petition, is a distinct violation of the Privileges of this House, and calls for some mark of its disapproval.

Sir CHARLES FORSTER (Walsall): I verymuch regret to trouble the House with this special Report; but the Committee on Public Petitions are of opinion that it is not a matter which ought to be passed over in silence. The Petition of which they complain is one from Haggerston in favour of the continuance of the Coal and Wine Duties, and it purports to bear upwards of 400 signatures. The great mass of the signatures, however, have been fabricated by some four or five individuals. Of this fact there is internal evidence, although the signatures have been smeared over in order to render detection difficult, if not impossible. The offence is one which this House has always treated with more or less severity. During the time that I have been Chairman of the Committee on Public Petitions, now more than 22 years, the usual practice has been when a Report of this kind has been presented, to discharge the order for laying such Petitions on the Table; and the Committee have instructed me to make a Motion to that effect on the present occasion. In some instances, steps have been taken to bring the offenders to punishment. That course was adopted in 1865; but the offence, in that case, was of a more serious character, and the House directed an inquiry. A Committee was appointed, of which I had the honour to be Chairman, and the result of the investigation was that the offender was committed to Newgate for the rest of the Session. I have not been instructed to ask the House to take that course on this occasion, but simply to move that the Order of the House for laying the Petition upon the Table be discharged. The Committee are of opinion that no spurious Petition should be allowed to be on the Table; and, under the circumstances, I beg, in the name of the Committee, to move that the Order that the said Petition be allowed to be on the Table, be read and discharged.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Order [6th April], that the Petition of Ratepayers of Haggerston, in favour of the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill, do lie upon the Table, be read, and discharged." —(*Sir Charles Forster.*)

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I trust that something further will be done in this matter, and I hope that the hon. Baronet, on behalf of the Committee on Public Petitions, will take some stronger action. The reason I have for expressing this hope is this—I do not know whether I should be in order in referring to evidence which has been taken by a Committee of this House now sitting upstairs, but which has not yet been laid on the Table. If I am not in Order, of course I will not do so.

Mr. SPEAKER: The course suggested by the hon. Member would certainly be contrary to the general practice of the House.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Then I will not refer to that evidence; but will simply say that I have strong reasons for knowing that money is being largely spent in collecting signatures to such Petitions; and I think the House ought not to permit themselves to be misled as they have been misled before, and may, probably, be misled again, by the presentation of Petitions which the Chairman of the Committee on Public Petitions has very properly characterized as bogus Petitions, contracted for at so much per hundred. I do not know whether the hon. Baronet proposes to make his Motion stronger than it stands at present, or, if not, whether it will be competent for some other hon. Member to move an Amendment.

Sir CHARLES FORSTER: I have not been instructed by the Committee on Public Petitions to do more than to move the discharge of the Order directing the Petition to be on the Table; but it is quite competent for the hon. Member to make a Motion.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Then I beg to move that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the *bona fides* of this Petition.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to second the Amendment.

Sir CHARLES FORSTER: So far as I and the Committee on Public Petitions are concerned, we are prepared to leave the matter in the hands of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do I understand the hon. Member for Northampton to move an Amendment?

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I would ask you, Sir, whether it is competent for me to allow the Motion of the hon. Baronet to be carried, and then to follow it up with a Motion for the appointment of a Select Committee on a subsequent day?

Mr. SPEAKER: It will be competent for the hon. Member to submit an Amendment in the event of the debate being adjourned. If the debate is adjourned, the hon. Gentleman would have time to consider what Amendment he ought to move; or, if he prefers that course, he can move an Amendment at once. Perhaps the hon. Member will consider it the better course to move the adjournment of the debate, so that the matter may be brought under the full consideration of the House.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Acting, Sir, upon your suggestion, I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Bradlaugh,*)—put, and *agreed to.*

Mr. SPEAKER: To what day?

Mr. BRADLAUGH: This day week.

Debate *adjourned* till *Monday* next.

QUESTIONS.

—o—

IRISH LAND COURT—DELAYS IN ROSCOMMON.

Dr. COMMINS (Roscommon, S.) asked Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Whether a large number of cases, entered in the Land Court from the County Roscommon as far back as 1855-6, are yet awaiting for trial; whether appeals in land cases from decisions of the Sub-Commissioners, or the County Court for the County Roscommon, entered as far back as July, 1884, amongst others, the appeals of Mary Kelly, Pat Kelly, Anthony M'Dermot, and John Milot, tenants, against William Sampey, landlord, in which it is alleged that the rent fixed is exorbitant, remain yet unheard, and without any time being fixed for the hearing of the same; if he can state what is the cause of the delay; is he aware that some of the tenants whose appeals so stand over have been sued and decreed for the rents they appeal against as exorbitant; whether he can state when these appeals are likely to be heard; and, whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government in Ireland to do anything whereby the decisions of the Sub-Commission Courts, and of the Court of Appeal, may be made more expeditious?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Holmes) (Dublin University): Sixteen cases in all, that were entered before the 1st of August last, and that had been previously adjourned for various reasons, still stand for hearing. Since the 1st of August a very large number of new cases have been brought into the Court; and it is proposed that there should be a continuous sitting in Roscommon of a Sub-Commission of five Members during the months of May, June, and July, when it is expected that all cases entered up to the 23rd of December last will be disposed of. Many appeals, some of them entered so far back as the year 1884, and including three of the cases named, are still unheard; but these cases will be taken up and, it is hoped, disposed of at Sligo on the 16th of May, at Castletown on the 31st of May, and Roscommon on the 27th of June. The delay has arisen from press of business, and the Irish Land Bill, now before the other House, contains provisions calculated to remedy, to a considerable extent, the evil. I have no information, nor the means of obtaining information, to enable me to answer the fourth paragraph of the Question.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND)—THE POST OFFICE AT LETTERKENNY.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he has received a largely and influentially signed Memorial from the inhabitants of Letterkenny, County Donegal; whether he has been able to make inquiries into the justice and soundness of the complaint therein made, as to the unsuitableness of the premises of the present postmaster for the business and the public convenience of the town; and, whether he will take any steps to secure that the postal business shall be conducted in a central, suitable, and convenient situation?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University), in reply, said, he had not received any such Memorial; but he understood it was the opinion of the Post Office Authorities in Ireland that the premises at present used were suitable; and, so far as he knew, they were certainly convenient. But if he received any such Memorial, or if his hon. Friend wished to press the matter further, he (Mr. Raikes) would make further inquiry.

MERCHANT SHIPPING—BOATS OF OCEAN-GOING VESSELS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, If any official inspection is made of the boats of ocean-going vessels; if any regulations are laid down as to the readiness of the boats for sea, and their being kept provided with oars, sails, life-belts, fresh water, biscuit, and material for light; and, if crews are required to be regularly exercised in lowering the boats, so that stations and duties may be known in the event of disaster?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Official inspection is made of the boats of all steam and sailing ships which carry more than 12 passengers. No official inspection is required by statute of the boats of other ships. All sea-going ships which do not carry any passengers are required to carry boats in accordance with Table S in the Schedule to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, as well as all ships that carry more than 12 passengers. The regulations concerning the boats of ships, other than those carrying passengers, are contained in the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, sec. 292, and cannot be altered by the Board of Trade. The boats are, by the statute, required to be "supplied with all requisites for use," and "to be kept so as to be at all times fit and ready for use." In the case of steamships carrying more than 12 passengers who are not emigrants, the boats are hung in davits, and they—with the sails, oars, life-belts and life-jackets for the crews of the lifeboats—are surveyed periodically, before a certificate authorizing them to go to sea is issued by the Board of Trade. In the case of emigrant ships, a further inspection is made, before the ship goes to sea, of the boats and their equipment, which include, in addition, breakers for fresh water, biscuit, and material for light, &c. And the crews are required to be stationed and exercised when opportunities occur at sea. In the steamers belonging to large companies it is the invariable practice to station and muster the crew for exercise in the lowering of boats at regular intervals.

COMMISSIONERS OF IRISH LIGHTS—LIGHTHOUSE AT ARDGLASS.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Secretary to the Board of Trade, Whether he can state the cause of the delay in utilizing the new lighthouse at Ardglass, County Down; and, whether, considering the importance of Ardglass as a fishery harbour, he will state definitely when the lighthouse will be opened for use?

The SECRETARY (Baron Henry De Worms) (Liverpool, East Toxteth): This lighthouse is on the point of being handed over by the Board of Public Works in Dublin to the Commissioners of Irish Lights, who hope to have it lighted in about a month.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) MAIL ACCOMMODATION TO NEWTOWNARDS AND DOWNPATRICK.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Postmaster General, with reference to his communication with the Treasury on the subject of increased mail accommodation to Newtownards and Downpatrick, Whether he can state definitely when the new arrangements will come into operation?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): After communication with the Treasury, I have entered upon further negotiations with the Belfast and County Down Railway Company respecting the improvement of the mail service to Newtownards, Downpatrick, &c.; but whether the improvement desired can be effected will depend upon the arrangement of terms satisfactory both to the Railway Company and the Department.

POST OFFICE (IRELAND) — DELAYS WITH THE COUNTY DOWN RAILWAY COMPANY.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.) asked the Postmaster General, Whether, in case of the general arrangement with respect to the day mails between the Post Office and the County Down Railway Company being further delayed, he will recommend the adoption of the alternative plan proposed by the Newtownards Town Commissioners, that the day mail between that town and Belfast should be carried by post car?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes) (Cambridge University): In the event of the negotiations with the Belfast and County Down Railway Company, which are now proceeding, not having a satisfactory termination, I will consider the question of conveying the day mail between Newtownards and Belfast by mail car. The practicability of a mail car service has already been submitted for the consideration of the Department; but the question has been temporarily postponed, pending the negotiations with the Railway Company.

BOARD OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (IRELAND)—MR. J. A. IRWIN, CARRICKAWILKIN, CO. ARMAGH.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is true that Mr. James A. Irwin, late teacher of the Carrickawilkin (County Armagh) National School, who was recently dismissed from the service of the Board of National Education, Ireland, for his connection with the Orange Society and for using the school for the purposes of that organization, is still in possession of the Carrickawilkin school teacher's residence, and is conducting a private elementary school therein, and also a science and art class; and, whether the Board of National Education have yet appointed a teacher to the position vacated by the dismissal of Mr. Irwin; and, if so, why do they allow Mr. Irwin to continue in occupation of, and to conduct a rival school in, premises under their control?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet): I am informed

that there is no official residence for the teacher of Carrickawilkin National School. The late teacher may be conducting classes at his private residence; but that is a matter entirely outside the control of the Commissioners of National Education. The Commissioners have no power to appoint a new teacher—this rests with the local manager.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN asked, whether it was not true that the late teacher was still using the house for the purpose of evening classes?

Colonel KING-HARMAN: I understand not.

THE MAGISTRACY (IRELAND)—BANTRY AND DUNNO PETTY SESSIONS —DISTRICT INSPECTOR CRANE.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether it is a fact that District Inspector Crane usually occupies a seat on the magisterial bench at the Bantry and Dunno Petty Sessions Courts; and, whether he has made observations relating to the cases before the court; and, if so, whether steps will be taken to prevent his sitting in future on the magisterial bench?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied): I understand District Inspector Crane has been in the habit of occupying a seat on the Bench at Petty Sessions at Bantry and elsewhere. But while so seated he does not appear to have made any observations on cases which came before the Bench beyond what he was bound to make in the discharge of his duty. It appears that it is a frequent practice throughout Ireland for Constabulary officers to be so seated at the invitation of the magistrate; but the Inspector General does not approve of it, and takes every opportunity of informing his officers so. I may add, he has written to Mr. Crane to that effect.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)—THE SKINNERS' ESTATE, DRAPERSTOWN.

Mr. M'CARTAN (Down, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether his attention had been called to the evictions commenced on the Skinners' Estate, near Draperstown, County Derry, on Monday last; whether 250 policemen, under command of one Divisional Magistrate, one Resident Magistrate, one county inspector, and five district inspectors, have been sent there by the Government to assist the sheriffs, bailiffs, and emergency men in carrying out the evictions; whether the shopkeepers of Draperstown kept their shutters on their windows when the evicting force were leaving the town for the scene of action on Monday morning; whether the shopkeepers and car owners refused to have any dealings with the police when engaged on these evictions, and whether the public pump of Draperstown was locked against them; whether the cars ordered by the authorities from Coleraine and Derry were unable to reach the evicting parties, owing to the removal of the bridges, and on account of the obstacles placed in their way; whether the police, before their departure from Draperstown on Monday morning, charged with drawn swords men, women, and children in the streets of the town; whether he can state the number of the persons evicted and the amount of rent, and also the amount of costs due by each evicted tenant; and, whether the authorities will permit the Irish National League to erect huts or sheds on the evicted farms, in which the homeless tenants and their families can obtain shelter, pending the passing of the remedial measures for the Irish tenants?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied): A force of 200 police was sent not to assist, but to protect the Sheriff when carrying out the evictions on the Skinners' estate. I regret to say that it is true that the party met with a considerable amount of opposition and obstruction as mentioned. It is not a fact that the police charged any persons with drawn swords in the streets; a party of truncheon men, however, did disperse a disorderly mob. The number of persons evicted was 38 from six holdings. The total amount due was £203, which includes £68 borrowed money, and the costs in one case £4 10*s.* and in the remainder £2 10*s.* in each. As to the last part of the Question, the authorities have no power whatever to direct or order landlords to allow huts or sheds to be erected on evicted farms.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES (ANIMALS) ACTS—SLAUGHTER OF DAIRY COWS IN DUBLIN.

Mr. W. J. CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, If his attention has been called to the large number of dairy cows recently slaughtered in Dublin by order of Government; whether it is a fact that twenty-one animals, belonging to Mrs. Keegan, of Mounttown, were so slaughtered, thirteen of them being, according to the report of Veterinary Inspector Hedley, who made a post-mortem examination, free from disease; whether he can state what the cost to the ratepayers, consequent on the slaughter of these animals, will be; and, whether the Government will consider the feasibility of establishing a hospital farm, as a sanitarium, somewhere near Dublin, to which cattle that have not shown any symptoms of disease might be removed from infected farms, so as to avoid the useless sacrifice of property and consequent tax upon the ratepayers?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied): It is a fact that 21 animals were so slaughtered at Mounttown, and that 13 of them were found, on post-mortem examination, to be free from disease. The course adopted was rendered necessary by the long-continued existence of disease in the dairy yard in which the cattle were confined. The cost to the ratepayers is about £180; but one-half of that will subsequently be recouped to them from the General Cattle Diseases Fund. The Irish Government do not consider that it would be practicable to establish a hospital farm as suggested.

POST OFFICE—"CARTES TÉLÉGRAMMES."

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General, Whether he is aware that "cartes télégrammes," similar to postcards, of various values, inclusive of reply cards, are issued in Paris, which are collected every five minutes from special boxes and transmitted by pneumatic tubes to the General Post Office, and in the use of which the sender is not limited as to number of words; and, whether he will consider the advisability of introducing this system into London and other large towns?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES) (Cambridge University): I am aware that in Paris, as also in Berlin and Vienna, there are systems of pneumatic tubes, by means of which letters, telegrams, and *cartes télégrammes* are distributed. The question of adopting such a system in London has been considered by my Predecessors in Office, and they came to the conclusion that it was not desirable, either in the interests of the public or of the Post Office, to establish it. I have not looked into the matter myself, but will take an opportunity of doing so.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY — SENTENCE OF DEATH ON SHAW.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock, &c.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to the report in *The Lagos Observer* of 19th February, of the trial of a man named Shaw, who was sentenced to death by Mr. Sergeant, Acting General Agent of the Royal Niger Company; that the trial took place at eight o'clock in the morning, when sentence is alleged to have been pronounced in this summary fashion, "You will be hung after breakfast;" and that when Shaw asked for five minutes in which to say his prayers, Sergeant is reported to have replied, "Oh, you will have plenty of time to pray in the next world;" whether the trial and condemnation of Shaw, if correctly narrated in *The Lagos Observer*, were in contravention of the "West Africa Order, 1885," issued in conformity with principles agreed upon at the Berlin Conference; and, whether, in view of many questions gravely affecting the powers, privileges, and duties of the Royal Niger Company, Her Majesty's Government will cause inquiry to be made into the manner in which the Royal Niger Company exercise the powers conferred on them by their Charter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): A full Report of the case referred to has been received. It shows that the statement in the hon. Member's Question is incorrect in every particular. The facts are that Shaw, a negro in the Company's service, was tried by Major Veitch, then supreme judicial officer under the Royal Niger Company's jurisdiction. He had served with distinction in South Africa, and has since died. Mr. Sergeant is the head of the Company's executive, and had nothing to do with the trial. The trial took place at 8 a.m., which is not unusual in tropical countries. It was conducted in the most regular manner. The accused pleaded guilty; but the evidence was recorded, and the witnesses were cross-examined. No such words were used as are stated in the Question, and sentence was pronounced in the usual English form. The trial did not take place under the Order in Council of 1885, which has reference only to territories where the Queen exercises jurisdiction under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act. That Order has nothing to do with the principles of the Berlin Conference, which do not apply to the Niger, except as regards the free navigation of the river.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): At what hour of the clock was this man executed?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he understood he was executed at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and that there were special reasons for that time, inasmuch as the occurrence took place in the midst of a tribe which was extremely excited at the murder of a woman. Probably further loss of life would have occurred if the murderer had not been executed.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON asked, if Major Veitch, who pronounced the words of the sentence, was not an assessor?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he had read all the papers. There was a complete Report, and a great many notes of evidence were taken. Major Veitch was not an assessor. He was occupying the position of principal judicial officer under the Company, and he tried the prisoner himself. Mr. Sergeant, the chief executive officer, had nothing to do with it.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON asked, whether Major Veitch was not a servant of the Company?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, he was an officer acting in the service of the Company.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked, from what source the hon. Baronet the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs received his information; whether it was not given by officers of the Company; and also whether the Company was not in the habit of importing a large amount of spirituous liquors, and deriving a considerable income by charging a very heavy price for it?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, the reports had certainly been received through the medium of the Company, and they could not be obtained in any other way. He had seen all the essential documents. They were not reports prepared by officers of the Company in this country; but were original reports, made upon the spot. As to the importation of liquor, that was another question; and he had made himself acquainted with all the circumstances. The Company had checked the importation, and would also put down the sale of drink to the utmost of their power; and, at the Berlin Conference, they endeavoured to get the consent of the other Powers to prohibit the entrance of spirits there at all, but they were unable to obtain a general concurrence.

MR. LABOUCHERE asked, whether the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to say that the Company itself was not importing drink?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, that the Company was a trading company, and he supposed it did; but he should say that wherever they could guard against the competition of smuggling they did so, and stopped the importation of liquor.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Naturally.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON said, that as the information came from the Company itself, he should like to ask whether it would not be better to check the information by some independent inquiry?

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON said, there was no other authority but the Company in the region where this took place. The Company were at the beginning of their enterprize, and they seemed to be conducting their affairs in a judicious manner under circumstances of great difficulty.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON asked, if there was no Consul in the Delta?

[No reply.]

LUNATIC ASYLUMS—ATTENDANCE OF BANDS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been called to the fact that the band from the Whittingham Lunatic Asylum took part in the proceedings of a Primrose League demonstration at Goosnargh; and, whether bands of lunatic asylums, maintained at the public cost, are permitted to take an active part in these demonstrations?

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the Question, I should like to ask, if any lunatic has taken any exception to this proceeding; and, if so, whether anyone but a lunatic has complained of it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the authorities of the asylum that it is not a fact that the band of the Asylum took part in a Primrose League demonstration, though certain members of the band, when off duty, performed there in their private capacity. I see nothing irregular in such a proceeding. As to the Question of my hon. Friend (Mr. Johnston), not being a lunatic, I am unable to answer him.

POLICE (METROPOLIS)—ABOLITION OF MARLBOROUGH STREET POLICE COURT.

MR. PITT-LEWIS (Devon, Barnstaple) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether his attention has been directed to a Petition, addressed to him at the Home Office, signed by many of the principal tradesmen and largest ratepayers at the West End, against the abolition of the Marlborough Street Police Court, said to be in contemplation; whether he has any information to show that this Petition represents the feeling generally and strongly prevailing in the West End, and that, had time allowed, the Petition would have been far more numerously signed; to what Court the business of the Marlborough Street Court would, in the event of its abolition, be transferred, and what is the accommodation and in particular the state of the cells at that Court; and, whether he will state on what grounds it is suggested that the Court should be discontinued?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE (Mr. MATTHEWS) (Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; it is a fact that such a Petition has been received by me. It was enclosed in a letter alleging that, with more time, more signatures could have been obtained. It has become necessary for the conduct of business in the Hammersmith and Wandsworth districts, that full day Courts should be held in each of those districts. This change can only be effected by appointing additional magistrates, or concentrating the other Police Court districts of the Metropolis. The Treasury have expressed a desire that the latter and more economical plan should be followed, if possible, and I have, therefore, directed a Departmental Committee to inquire whether it is possible for the magisterial business of the area now served by the Bow Street, Westminster, and Marlborough Street Courts to be performed by fewer magistrates and in fewer Courts than at present. I have directed that those inquiries shall cover the question of the existing accommodation and state of the cells at Marlborough Street Police Court. These inquiries are still proceeding, and are not likely to be concluded until ample time shall have been given for the receipt and consideration of written representations from those interested in the efficiency of the magisterial service of the area to which I have referred.

ADMIRALTY—THE SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY (IRELAND)—SHIPYARD ON THE FOYLE.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is the fact that the shipbuilding industry has been extensively revived on the Foyle at Derry City; and, whether, having regard to the great efforts made by the Harbour Commissioners, the expenditure of public moneys and of private capital, to promote this useful Irish enterprise, he will advise a share of the Government orders being given to the shipyard on the Foyle?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): I understand that owing to the energy and ability of Mr. Charles T. Biggar, a new shipyard of considerable dimensions has been opened on the Foyle. The premises will be inspected by technical officers of the Admiralty, with a view to ascertaining their capability for executing Admiralty contracts.

INDIA (BENGAL)—MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF STRONG DRINK.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, Whether his attention has been called to the strong opposition of the Native population of the District of Uluberia, in Bengal, to the introduction of the out-still system for the manufacture and sale of strong drink; and, whether he will call the attention of the Government of India to the matter?

The UNDER SECRETARY (Sir John Gorst) (Chatham): A correspondent of a weekly Native newspaper in Bengal, having a circulation of 700, stated last February that he had learnt that the people of Uluberia were about to petition against an alleged intention of the authorities to establish ten out-stills there. I do not think it needful to bring so vague a statement to the notice of the Government of India, especially as the Bengal Excise Commission only three years ago reported that the central, as opposed to the out-still, distillery system should be maintained in Uluberia.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN WALES — OFFICIAL AND SWORN INTERPRETERS.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether the Government will furnish a return of the interpreters who have been officially appointed in the several petty sessional divisions of the County of Flint, the date of their appointment, and the salary, if any, attached to the office; whether they are sworn on their first appointment or in every separate case; whether he has any information to show that some of the interpreters who act are most inefficient; whether, in some of the petty sessional divisions, the police act as interpreters; and, whether he will consider the advisability of forbidding policemen, who are official informers, to act as interpreters in a Court of Justice?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): I am informed, by the Clerks of the Peace, that no interpreters have been officially appointed in the several petty sessional divisions of the county. In three out of the seven petty sessional divisions in which Welsh is spoken, a clerk in the magistrate's clerk's office has acted as interpreter for more than 20 years without payment, unless in very exceptional cases. In the remaining four divisions, I believe the police do sometimes act as interpreters. Interpreters are sworn in each case, as and when required. I have no information to show that some of them are inefficient. No complaint of their inefficiency has reached me. I see no practical objection to the employment of police constables as interpreters. They are intelligent men, sworn to interpret truly. Most of the cases are not police cases; and, moreover, the practice constitutes a great saving of expense.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1882—A SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. H. F. H. ELLIOT (Ayrshire, N.) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether his attention has been drawn to a Motion on the Notice Paper "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of 'The Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act, 1882' "; and, whether the Government will give its consent to the proposed inquiry?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): The attention of the Government has been called to the Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member; but they do not consider that, even if such an inquiry as is proposed should hereafter be thought necessary, the present would be a suitable time for it, inasmuch as the Educational Endowments Commission is approaching the period when its term of office expires, and such a Committee, while it might disturb and delay operations now going on, would not be in a position to review the work of the Commission as a whole, or to give any practical advice to Parliament, with respect to its results, before the expiry of the powers under the Act.

EXCISE (METROPOLIS)—CONVICTIONS FOR SELLING ADULTERATED BEER.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, The number of publicans and beersellers in the Metropolitan Police District who have been convicted of selling adulterated beer during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1887; the total amount of penalties imposed; and, to what fund such penalties were appropriated?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square), in reply, said, the number of publicans and beersellers so convicted up to the time mentioned was 316. The total amount of penalties imposed was £7,667. Such penalties are carried to the head of Miscellaneous Revenue.

PUBLIC HEALTH — M. PASTEUR'S TREATMENT OF HYDROPHOBIA.

Mr. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Whether it is a fact that a constable of the Nottinghamshire Police, and two constables of the Metropolitan Police, were sent to M. Pasteur for treatment last year; whether any of them were sent at the public expense; whether, considering the number of deaths that have attended M. Pasteur's treatment, he will use his influence to prevent any more public servants being subjected to it, or public money being spent upon it, until the Buisson Vapour Bath system, which can be obtained in England, has been thoroughly investigated; and, whether, as a Committee has been appointed to investigate M. Pasteur's system, he will appoint another committee to investigate the Buisson Vapour Bath system of preventing hydrophobia?

The SECRETARY of STATE (Mr. Matthews) (Birmingham, E.): A constable of the Nottinghamshire Police was sent to M. Pasteur for treatment at the cost of the county rate, and several constables of the Metropolitan Police were also sent to him, in three cases at the public expense, the charges amounting to £22 11*s*. The report of the Committee appointed to inquire into M. Pasteur's treatment has not yet been received; but it is not proposed to use any influence to prevent public servants being subjected to his treatment. There is no intention at present to ask the Committee to extend their inquiry to the Buisson Vapour Bath system, or to appoint another Committee to inquire into that system.

PRISONS (IRELAND) — ACCOMMODATION IN IRISH GAOLS.

Mr. NOLAN (Louth, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, How many prisoners can be accommodated in prisons in Ireland at present; what is the average number under detention in that country; and, what steps the Government propose to take in the event of the ordinary prison accommodation proving insufficient owing to the provisions of the proposed Criminal Law Amendment Bill?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied): About 4,000 prisoners can be, at present, accommodated in the prisons in Ireland. The average number under detention is about 2,500. The Irish Government have no reason to apprehend that the accommodation now available will prove inadequate.

IRISH LAND LAW BILL—PERPETUITY LEASEHOLDERS.

Mr. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Whether the Government, notwithstanding the text of the measure, intend to include perpetuity leaseholders, otherwise excluded from the Land Bill, within the provisions substituting a written notice for the execution of an ejectment for non-payment of rent; whether it is intended to include likewise lessees under judicial or other rents exceeding £50 outside equitable relief; and, whether he is aware that at Common Law a landlord will be entitled, at any moment after the receipt of such written notice by the tenant, peaceably to enter the tenant's house and premises and take possession, and without any process of law, or any summons under the Act of 1860?

The PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY (Colonel King-Harman) (Kent, Isle of Thanet) (who replied): The Government intend that the written notice, mentioned in Clause 4 of the Irish Land Bill, shall apply to all holdings which are agricultural and pastoral in their character, irrespective of what the amount of their rents may be, and whether they are held in perpetuity or not. As the notice will have the effect of placing the tenant in the position of a caretaker, the landlord will, after the service thereof, have the same right which he has under the present law, of resuming possession of the holding if the caretaker consents thereto, or abandons such possession.

ADMIRALTY—COLOUR SERGEANTS OF THE ROYAL MARINES.

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty, Why the Colour Sergeants of the Royal Marines are not on the same footing as regards pensions as Colour Sergeants of the Line?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): Steps are in progress to assimilate the position of the two Services in this respect. An Order in Council has been prepared, and is now before the Treasury.

CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HER MAJESTY'S REIGN—THE NAVAL REVIEW—THE PENSIONERS' RESERVE.

Captain PRICE (Devonport) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, Whether it is his intention to call up any of the Pensioners' Reserve for service at the forthcoming Naval Review; and, whether it is to be understood that a Naval Pensioner, when called upon to serve, shall receive the pay of the rating which he held on discharge, as in the case of a Marine Pensioner; or, if not, what is the reason of the difference?

The FIRST LORD (Lord George Hamilton) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is not intended to call up any of the Pensioners' Reserve for service at the forthcoming Naval Review. It is not possible to lay down, as a fixed rule, that a Naval Pensioner, when called upon to serve, shall receive the pay of the rating which he held on discharge in addition to his pension; but in so far as the exigencies of the Service will permit, Naval Pensioners will be given ratings not inferior to those which they held on being pensioned. The difficulties occurring in the case of Naval Pensioners receiving the same rating when called upon to serve, do not apply to Royal Marine Pensioners, who, as they must have been either sergeants, corporals, or privates when pensioned, could without difficulty be employed in such ratings. The great number and variety of ratings in which seamen are employed render it impossible to promise that seamen pensioners should have, when called upon to serve, the same rating as when pensioned.

THE FINANCIAL PROPOSALS — THE LOCAL LOAN.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he is prepared to issue his proposed Local Loan in the form of ninety-nine years Terminable Annuities; and, if he will state the amount per cent of difference of annual charge of ninety-nine years, as compared with Perpetual Annuities, taking three per cent as the standard annual charge of perpetual annuities?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I should not be prepared to substitute 99 years' Terminable Annuities for the proposed Local Loans Stock. I hope that this Stock will be accepted by the public on equal terms, and with precisely the same readiness as the other great Parliamentary Stocks. Terminable Annuities, on the other hand, are not so readily marketable; because they are unsuitable investments for trustees—who form a large portion of the holders of Government Stocks—by reason of the periodical reduction of capital, and the difficulties which surround the re-investment in small sums of a proportion of each annuity instalment for the purpose of replacing the capital repaid by the annuity. The amount of difference per cent of annual charge between a 99 years' Terminable Annuity and a Perpetual Annuity at a rate of interest of 3 per cent per annum payable half-yearly, would be 3*s.* 4*d.* (£0.16605) per annum in respect of each £100 sterling borrowed.

DISTRESS IN THE METROPOLIS.

MR. FLOWER (Bedford, Luton) asked the President of the Local Government Board, When the result of the inquiry into the distress prevailing in "four representative" districts of the Metropolis will be laid upon the Table of the House?

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. RITCHIE) (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The enumeration has been completed, and the Returns have been received; but it has been considered necessary to submit the Returns to a very critical course of examination. That is now being done in the Registrar General's Department, and I am afraid it will take some time. I am not able to say what time it will take; but the matter will be pushed forward as quickly as possible.

AFRICA (WEST COAST)—BRITISH CONSULAR JURISDICTION—THE ORDER IN COUNCIL.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether the Order in Council for extending British Consular Jurisdiction on the West Coast of Africa, so as to insure the apprehension and punishment of criminals in that region, which was prepared in consequence of the outrage at Osutcha, and was stated in the House on 24th July and 7th November, 1884, to be about to be issued, has ever been issued; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government has made any other provision to secure the same end?

THE UNDER SECRETARY (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The Order in Council referred to was issued on the 26th of March, 1885, and was duly published in *The London Gazette* of the 10th April following.

BULGARIA — SPEECH OF CONSUL GENERAL JONES AT PHILIPPOPOLIS.

MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Whether his attention has been called to the report, through the Agence Havas, of a speech of Captain Jones, Consul General at Philippopolis, published in *The Standard* of 22nd April; whether her Majesty's Government have authorized Captain Jones, or any other Diplomatic Agent, to pronounce political speeches; and, whether Her Majesty's Government approve of his action?

THE UNDER SECRETARY (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): The speech reported to have been made by Captain Jones has been ascertained to have been entirely misreported. Captain Jones made no reference to Russia.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER — EXCLUSION OF FOG FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked the First Commissioner of Works, Whether he is now able to report the result of Dr. Percy's experiments on the exclusion of fog from the atmosphere of the House?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER (Mr. PLUNKET) (Dublin University): I am not able to report as to the result of the experiments. Dr. Percy has prepared an apparatus for the purpose of making experiments whenever an opportunity in the shape of a fog shall arrive; but I hope the day may be far distant.

AFGHANISTAN—REPORTED DISTURBANCES.

MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India, If he is able to give any information respecting the recent disturbances in Afghanistan?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (Sir JOHN GORST) (Chatham): The information received at the India Office tends to show that the insurrectionary movement among the Ghilzais against the authority of the Ameer is not spreading, and that the Ameer's troops have been successful in the engagements they have had with the rebels.

NORTH AMERICAN FISHERIES—CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, If any, and what, reply has been received from the Government of the United States, regarding the proposals contained in Lord Salisbury's despatch of the 24th March, for a settlement of the Anglo-American fisheries disputes; whether, seeing that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to agree to Mr. Bayard's proposal of a mixed Commission (whilst in the meantime continuing, without any claim for pecuniary indemnity to Canada, the Treaty of Washington for the current fishery season), they will at once release those vessels which have been seized for alleged violation of the Treaty of 1818, and also indemnify the owners of ships already condemned and forfeited; and, to inquire what answer has been received from the Canadian Government regarding the conduct of the authorities on shore and afloat at Malpeque in refusing to receive the shipwrecked crew and stores of the Dominion Schooner *Neskilita*, rescued by the American ship *Molly Adams*, and again for refusing to supply the master of the same ship, when he put into Port Medway, with either provisions or water, of which he had run short in consequence of having fed for three days seventeen men rescued from the *Neskilita?*

THE UNDER SECRETARY (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON) (Manchester, N.E.): No reply has as yet been received from the Government of the United States to Lord Salisbury's despatch of March 24. The hon. Member can scarcely expect Her Majesty's Government to require the Government of Canada to release vessels seized on account of violations of the Treaty of 1818, on the assumption that their proposals will be accepted; or to undertake to indemnify owners of vessels condemned and forfeited in course of law. A complete answer has been received from the Canadian Government to the complaints made by the United States in the case of the *Molly Adams*. The despatch conveying it, which arrived too late to be included in the Papers recently presented to Parliament, will be communicated to the Government of the United States. It disproves the allegations mentioned by the hon. Member, which he appears to have accepted on the *ex parte* statement.

MR. GOURLEY asked whether the right hon. Baronet had not received a further deposition from the captain of the *Molly Adams?*

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: Yes; further depositions have been received, and are included in the Papers; but the facts stated by the Government of Canada put the matter in a wholly different light.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (ENGLAND AND WALES)—ALLEGED BOYCOTTING AND INTIMIDATION IN ENGLAND.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, Whether, having regard to the grave charges made in this House in respect of Boycotting and intimidation in connection with Parliamentary Elections, he intends to allow the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the truth of those charges?

SIR CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked whether, according to the information in Election Petitions relating to the Elections of 1885 and 1886, no cases of attempt at intimidation had been attempted to be proved in any of those Petitions; and, whether that was not the tribunal where cases of intimidation should be investigated?

The FIRST LORD (Mr. W. H. Smith) (Strand, Westminster): In answer to the Question last asked, I have to say that I have no personal knowledge of the transactions before the Election Judges; and, as far as I remember, no cases of intimidation were sustained before the Judges in the course of the last two General Elections. With regard to the Question of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division of Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare), I am not able to admit the statement that grave charges have been made in this House, and with great respect to the intelligence of the hon. Member, I can hardly think it possible that he is really of that opinion. No; it is not the intention of the Government to appoint a Committee, holding, as I do, with my hon. Friend behind me (Sir Charles Lewis), that the law is amply strong enough to deal with any case of Boycotting or intimidation in England.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked, Whether the right hon. Gentleman was not aware that the Boycotting and intimidation complained of in the counties would extend to preventing witnesses from giving evidence before the Election Judges?

Mr. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir; I do not believe anything of the sort.

PARLIAMENT—RULES OF DEBATE—OFFENSIVE IMPUTATIONS ON MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSE—MR. BRODRICK AND MR. PARNELL.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the hon. Member for the Guildford Division of Surrey (Mr. Brodrick) a Question, of which I have given him private Notice—Whether he is correctly reported in *The Manchester Courier* of Saturday last, as having made a speech on the previous day at Blackburn, in which he used this language—

> "There was one subject on which their opponents were exceedingly blind. He meant the letter of Mr. Parnell, which appeared in *The Times*. He was not going to mince language about that letter, and he said it was Mr. Parnell's letter."

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY, WAR DEPARTMENT (Mr. Brodrick) (Surrey, Guildford): In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the expressions to which he has alluded are taken from a report which I have not with me, but which, of course, I accept as stated by him. I am under the impression that I did not use the exact words to which he refers. I used the expression—"I will not mince my words; I call it Mr. Parnell's letter." I gave my reasons for so calling it in the absence of any action taken to disprove it in a Court of Law. I believe, Sir, I was absolutely in Order. I should have been out of Order in this House in not accepting the explanation of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell); but I believe that I should not be entitled outside the House to doubt the authenticity of what has appeared in *The Times* any more than the hon. Gentleman's statement in this House; and I would leave the designation of the letter which I gave, and which I believe to be the popular designation, to the judgment of the House and the country.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask you a question, Sir, and if possible to procure your ruling on a matter which appears to me to be one of Privilege. You will observe that the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Guildford Division of Surrey substantially adheres to his statement, and he calls the letter, "Mr. Parnell's letter." I recall to your memory the fact that last Monday, the hon. Member for the City of Cork, from his place in this House said that the letter was a villainous and barefaced forgery, and, further, that it was an audacious fabrication, and, he added, there—

> "I certainly never heard of the letter; I never directed it to be written, and I never saw such a letter before I saw it in *The Times* this morning."

What I wish to ask you, Sir, is this. On the 22nd of February last the hon. Baronet the Member for the Cockermouth Division of Cumberland (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) called your attention to an article in *The Times*, imputing that certain Members associated with criminals, and asked you whether he would be in Order in moving a Resolution in reference to that language as a question of Privilege. In the course of your reply, you used these words—

> "The Rule is that, when imputations are made, in order to raise a case of Privilege, the

imputation must refer to the action of hon. Members in the discharge of their duties in the actual transaction of the Business of this House."—(3 *Hansard*, [311] 287.)

In regard to that relation and to the circumstances of the speech of the hon. Member, it is clear that the hon. Member imputes deliberate falsehood to my hon. Friend the Member for Cork—falsehood uttered in the course of a speech delivered by him from his place in this House. I therefore ask you, Sir, whether, having regard to your previous ruling, the matter is not one which can be dealt with as one of Privilege?

MR. SPEAKER: It does not appear to me from what has passed that the speech of the hon. Gentleman amounts to a question of Privilege. I do not say that the hon. Gentleman is not fully entitled to take notice of it; but, as far as I can gather, the words in the speech of the hon. Gentleman did not refer to any action in this House. That was the limitation that I placed on the question of Privilege. I do not wish to extend my ruling, or to contract it; but I think no question of Privilege has arisen, and it does not appear to be a case which falls within my definition of Privilege.

WAYS AND MEANS—ALLOCATION OF THE CARRIAGE TAX IN THE METROPOLIS.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whether he proposes to recommend to Parliament to allocate the proportion of the Carriage Tax, collected within the Metropolitan area, in aid of Metropolitan local taxation; and, by the amount of such tax to reduce the taxation of Metropolitan ratepayers?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I thought I had made it clear in my Financial Statement the other evening. My proposal is, simply, temporarily to double the contribution which is at present given in aid of the main roads. The authorities within the Metropolis will, therefore, receive double what they have been receiving, but they will not receive equivalent of the whole amount of the Carriage Tax collected in the Metropolitan area. Only those limited areas within which there are disturnpiked or main roads will receive any benefit under my proposal.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (SCOTLAND) —PROCEDURE UNDER THE CROFTERS ACT.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Lord Advocate, Whether he is aware that landlords in every county to which the Crofters Act applies have taken proceedings to make the crofters bankrupt, and to deprive them of the benefit of the Act; and, whether the Government will introduce a measure to amend the Crofters Act?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. MACDONALD) (Edinburgh and St. Andrews Universities): I am not aware that in every county such steps have been taken, and I am not aware that the intention is to make tenants bankrupts; but, certainly, some proceedings have been taken, and the hon. Member has sent me a telegram indicating that proceedings have been taken which, if carried to the end, would result under the Act of 1886, in rendering those tenants what we call *notour* bankrupts. The Government intend to introduce a Bill immediately in "another place," and push it rapidly through its stages, to prevent such a result, which certainly was not intended.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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WAYS AND MEANS.—COMMITTEE.

WAYS AND MEANS—*considered* in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Seven Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Three Pence Halfpenny;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Two Pence Halfpenny;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I believe, Mr. Courtney, it will be agreeable to the general understanding of the House, that upon the present occasion Members should take the opportunity of expressing, with the advantage of two or three days of reflection, that which occurs to them upon a consideration of the financial proposals of the Government. I shall begin, Sir, by confessing that I, for one, in common, I believe, with a good many hon. Members of this House—probably through my own fault—was under a complete mistake, not as to the fact that the financial proposals of the year were to be made known to us on Thursday last, but as to what the character of those financial proposals was likely to be. This entirely depended upon the construction or misconstruction which we put upon an epithet which the humility of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) himself induced him to employ in describing them. It was well understood that my right hon. Friend had stated that he intended to lay before the House a "Humdrum" Budget. We had to combine with that announcement the universal expectation, amounting almost to a knowledge, that there would be a moderate surplus—serving for unobtrusive and useful reductions as far as that surplus would permit; but that was, I admit, the whole extent of what I anticipated would be shown to the House on Thursday last. Instead of that, we had laid before us a Budget which, whether for good or for evil, will unquestionably, in my opinion, be remembered in future times, because it involves considerations, and proceeds upon principles which, at least, I say again, for good or for evil, entitle it to that distinction. Upon certain of those principles, I have the misfortune to entertain strong opinions; but I bear in mind that we are now dealing with a Resolution, and that that Resolution is the first real stage in the proceedings upon the finances of the year. I conceive that there is no intention in any portion of House to take issue upon any part of those proposals, so far as I know, during the discussion this evening; and I, therefore, regard this discussion as so far a preliminary proceeding. I am justified, and others will be justified, in stating opinions and impressions without reference to the terms in which they may think it their duty to pronounce an ultimate judgment, when the proceedings are further advanced, either on the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill or the National Debt Bill, both of which, I presume, it will be necessary, in order to give effect to the views of the Government, to lay before the House. I feel that there is this great advantage in this state of facts—that it becomes practical, and I hope easy, to discuss these matters, even on the points where our impressions may not be favourable, in terms such as not to create any political difficulty between the different portions of the House with regard to treating them upon their merits. That is my sincere and exclusive desire; and, therefore, I shall certainly so far restrain the expression of my own opinions as to make it a capital object to avoid using any language with respect to any portion of the proposals which would constitute a difficulty of the nature to which I have referred. I am also, of course, aware that the proposals of the Government depend for their ultimate acceptance, not so much upon the Government themselves, not so much upon their supporters—although their supporters constitute a numerous body—as upon the views of certain hon. Gentlemen sitting on this side of the House who have differed from us on the Irish Question. They are Gentlemen who, if these proposals of the Government be highly valuable and excellent, will be entitled to a great part of the merit, and who, if these proposals, or some of them, be the reverse of valuable or excellent, will, in my judgment, undoubtedly bear the principal responsibility. The facts before us are simple enough. I need not follow the details, which were most proper for the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay before the House. He starts, as I understand, with a surplus for the year 1886-7 of £767,000, and with an estimated surplus for the coming year of £975,000, which, by means of a minor —and I am inclined to believe a useful—

change he intends to make in regard to the transfers of shares and stocks of Companies, he intends to raise to £1,075,000. Not content with the opportunities which the possession of that comparatively moderate sum afford him, by one great stroke, the nature of which I will not even attempt to describe, he raises that surplus to what I may call the round sum of £2,800,000. The points before us are six. First of all with regard to the minor changes, the most important of which, as I have already said, for my part, I am disposed to regard with favour, believing that it is sound in principle and will greatly facilitate financial transactions, while it is not unfavourable to the Exchequer. The second point is the Local Loans Budget; the third is the Tobacco Duty; the fourth is the Grant in Aid of an amount equal to the Carriage Tax for the purposes of roads; the fifth is the reduction of the Income Tax; and the sixth is the reduction of the Sinking Fund of £28,000,000 for the reduction of the National Debt.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): With regard to the Carriage Tax, the total amount of the grants will be equal to the Carriage Tax. The amount now given is only one-half; and, by the proposal, it is doubled in the present year. As my right hon. Friend has stated, the grant will be equivalent to the amount of the tax.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: I am obliged by the explanation of my right hon. Friend, which will prevent any misapprehension arising from my imperfect statement. With regard to the Local Loan Budget, I hope my right hon. Friend will hereafter lay before us more fully the case—and an interesting and important case it is—for making the change he is about to introduce into our system. If I remember rightly, Sir Stafford Northcote contemplated a change of this nature—to what extent it was to go I do not know—but, unquestionably, there are many considerations which tend to recommend it. I am afraid it will not be found so easy to obtain from this House a full and free discussion, while the present block of Business continues, of local loans apart from the general finance of the country, at least not to an extent which, in the abstract, may be desirable. I wait, and give no unfavourable opinion, except to this extent—that I intend to express a misgiving, and even, perhaps, to offer a suggestion on a point which I understood from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is at present more or less open. We are told that the right hon. Gentleman intends to create a stock of £37,000,000, and I understood from an answer given by him, that that £37,000,000 was to be a 3 per cent Stock to be put separately in the market, and to stand upon the same footing there as other Consols or New or Reduced Stock. I own I hope that a better arrangement than that may be found. It appears to me that if there is to be a separate stock at all, it would be far better to make it a 2½ per cent Stock, and to reinforce the 2½ per cents now in the market than to take any other course. Above all, I think, the creation of a new 3 per cent Stock has this disadvantage—that unquestionably it would not possibly represent the public credit in so good, legible, and cheap a form as the greater stocks that now exist. No one is better aware than the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that even between the greater stocks that now exist there is a material distinction. There is a material difference between them, and the price of Consols, as Consols, is, I do not say invariably, a better price than is obtained for New 3 per cents and the Reduced, while, on the other hand, it very frequently, though not invariably, happens that the price borne by the 2½ per cent stock is better than the price borne by any of the 3 per cents. I see no reason why that fact should not receive a full and impartial consideration from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I must say, whether I agree with or differ from the final determination of the right hon. Gentleman on this point, I think I ought to congratulate the country on having for the first time, I believe, a Chancellor of the Exchequer to manage its finance, who is himself the author not only of a work, but of a standard and classical work, on one of the most complicated branches of monetary science. I pass on to the question of the Tobacco Duty, and upon that point I will not detain the House for any length of time. I am sorry to find that the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, if it be a right proposal—and I am very far from being prepared to say it is otherwise than right—is a condemnation of the experiment which was made about 1878 under the Government of Lord Beaconsfield. Plainly, if we are now to repeal this 4*d.* which was added to the Tobacco Duty, the conclusion is inevitable that it was a mistake to make the addition. I am afraid that may not be all. There is no question at all that the addition of 4*d.* has led to considerable adulteration of tobacco, using the word "adulteration" in the approved technical sense—the addition of material which, whether it be good or bad, is legitimately considered as making a factitious and unreal addition to the commodity to which it is added. No doubt there must be much more water in the tobacco the people smoke now than there used to be before the water was added when the duty was raised by the Government of Lord Beaconsfield; and it is not unnatural, therefore, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to repeal the addition in the hope of getting rid of the water; but I suspect it is much easier to repeal the addition than it may be to get rid of the water. For my part, I have not any great faith in the operation of the prohibition. No doubt, if it can be enforced it is good, thoroughly good; but if it cannot be enforced, then there only remains the hope that the competition of trade may suffice to bring down to the lowest point the profit necessary for carrying on the trade; and, if so, a sounder article will be got by the consumer than was supplied to him while the additional duty was imposed. But so much depends upon the manner in which trade is organized and upon the concentration of interests and communication upon trade questions which prevails at headquarters, that I confess I do not feel confident, although I am far from saying that it may not be right to make the reduction, that the benefits of that reduction will so far reach the consumer as to place him in the position in which he stood before the additional duty was made. I take next the sum of £280,000 for England in aid of local burdens, together with the £50,000 for Scotland, &c.—a somewhat different allocation for Ireland—which is to be awarded to the Local Authorities in respect of the Carriage Tax. I confess, Sir, I deeply regret this proceeding on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If we were discussing the matter in a Party sense, it might be said, and said with truth, that this is only a precise repetition of what was done by a Government which I had the honour to be connected with. That is perfectly true; but we never concealed or made any scruple of acknowledging that in making that proposal we simply submitted to the will—what we thought the imperious will, but the manifest and determined will—of the House of Commons, and we made the best terms we could for the public. We never pretended that we approved of the step, but we chose the less in preference to the greater evil. We could not have broken up the Government on such a question. On the other hand, the House of Commons would never for a moment have acquiesced in anything less than we proposed, and it was all we could do to prevent the expansion of that compulsion to a much greater length. I shall discuss this matter, not at great length, but with perfect freedom. I may say that I agree in everything which I understand to have been said on the subject by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill.) The objections to this form of proceedings are strong and manifest. I say that not at all because I think the position of the ratepayer deserves no commiseration and no relief. The position of the ratepayer is a cruel position. He is ground between the upper and the nether millstone. The occupier in this country—using that term as synonymous with ratepayers—is undoubtedly under covenants which largely and properly bind him to meet the charge of the rates, whatever they may be. But when that fashion of agreement come into force, and that liability was laid upon the occupier, the rates were for certain limited and narrow purposes, and the occupier knew what he was about. But what has happened within the last 20 or 30 years? A completely new set of economic and social wants have come into play, and great additions have been made to the public requirements. I assume that, for the most part, they have been wisely made. But what I say is that the greater part of the burden has been laid upon the occupier of the soil, whereas the ultimate benefit has gone almost entirely to the owner of the soil. The owner of the soil and the owner of houses is the person who will get a better rent in consequence of having better water and better drainage, and better applications of other kinds now provided for the rates; so that one set of people are called upon to pay for the improvements, and receive a short and temporary benefit, while another set of people get the whole of the permanent advantage. That is gross injustice. It will be necessary, therefore, to take into consideration not only the relation between realty and invisible property and visible property, but also the relation between the position of owner and the position of occupier. I do not speak of it as a matter altogether easy to handle. But still, in the case of the Income Tax, you have devised machinery by which it would be vain for the landlord to try to lay on the tenant, or the house owner, or the occupier the burden of the Income Tax. I do not at all say that it may not be the duty of the House to do something in mitigation of the very great hardship which is thrown on the occupier in relation to the owner. And what are all these Grants in Aid? No doubt they give an immediate solace to the occupier, but he does not find in them all the relief he ought to get, because they are opposed to economy and strict administration. Therefore, it is but a limited benefit compared to the benefit which the money ought to produce. No matter whether rents are rising or falling, upon the next adjustment the rates are calculated with the grants taken into account, and the landlord gets so much the more rent in consequence of the grants. These are very grave differences. You pretend by these Grants in Aid to rectify the inequality which undoubtedly exists at present between different kinds of property. That is true; but you are aggravating whatever exists between property and labour, because you are taking off a portion of the burden which ought to be borne by the fund supported in the main by property, and you lay it on the Consolidated Fund, which is to a preponderating degree supported by labour. You are applying a remedy to an evil which you do not cure or remove. You are introducing a new form of inequality, unjust, as I think, and which will always continue unjust to the people at large. But there was the objection stated by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, and it is the greatest of all, if it is not a conclusive objection. These grants of money are now given in the worst and most exceptional way, and do not, it is admitted, bear any certain relation to the substantial claims of the occupier of land and houses. But what you have in view, as is admitted on all hands, is a great and stringent reform of local government; and that great and stringent reform of local government necessarily treads on the toes of many persons and classes. Such a measure is not to be propelled by any lively or active movement of public opinion, while it is certain to be resisted by a great *vis inertiæ,* a great force of private prejudices and interests, which, except by a powerful leverage, you cannot hope to overcome. How does the case stand? It is just this. When the question of local government reform came first to be seriously discussed—when the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself introduced a large and comprehensive measure on the subject—at that time the system of Grants in Aid was comparatively contracted, and we have in our hands a very large fund; which fund was the operative instrument by means of which we could hope to overcome the resistance to a good system of local government, and smooth the way to its attainment. What have we been doing since? What was done in 1814? The fund was given away piece by piece, and every piece you gave away so far weakened your means of action in regard to procuring any effective reform of local government. That is most unsatisfactory, and I must confess that it does appear to me a matter of regret that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a Cabinet, with greater power to give effect to his own views than any Chancellor of the Exchequer who ever sat on that Bench during my recollection, and from circumstances which are by no means dishonourable to him—I say that it is a matter of regret that the right hon. Gentleman without any pressure from the House, or any necessity that I can conceive, should be disposed to continue this exceptional system, and to weaken the ground on which he and those who act with him stand in the House, for asking Parliament for an efficient reform of the system of local government. Then I come to the Income Tax. We are to have the Income Tax reduced by 1*d*. I may say, that that is a pecuniary boon to every one of us. The right hon. Gentleman is going to put into the pockets of each of us so many pounds. He is going to make us not a Christmas-box, but a sort of Whitsun-box—or rather an Easter offering, an Easter due in the shape of so many pounds a-piece. I admit that an Income Tax of 8*d*. is an Income Tax at a discreditably high rate for a time like this, when we have upon us no enormous pressure of burdens and no foreign complications—being happily relieved either wholly or partially from those under which a few years ago we were labouring. How ought the Income Tax to be reduced? The tax was put on to meet the growth and the high excess of expenditure. I contend that the Income Tax ought to be reduced as it has been reduced in former years, not by a resort to sources which I, for one, do not think legitimate, but that it ought to be reduced by a wholesome and sound process of public economy. The right hon. Gentleman has given us upon the subject of public economy many excellent and useful declarations, but at the same time he will admit that by the Budget and the measures he proposes economy is not promoted. I am not prepared to admit that the reduction of the Income Tax by the appropriation of another public fund, without reduction of expenditure, is a proceeding which ought to be approved. No doubt, it is not an agreeable thing to have this 8*d*. Income Tax. When we made great reductions of the Income Tax before, in 1860-1 and in 1866, they were made in a steady and regular progress of economy. That was before the time when the Revenue exhibited an extraordinary elasticity; indeed, it was at the time when we were suffering extreme pressure from the effects of the cotton famine in Lancashire. But we did continue to keep down the Income Tax by economy, and I must press upon the House that that is what ought to be done now. We now pay an Income Tax of 8*d*. in the pound, being a far richer people than we were at the time when Sir Robert Peel proposed in a landlords' Parliament—for it was much more of a landlords' Parliament than the present one—when Sir Robert Peel induced the landlords' Parliament to lay on the Income Tax expressly for the purpose of relieving the burdens of the people while commercial and financial reforms were being effected. That tax was borne for nearly 20 years at either 7*d*. or over 7*d*. in the pound, for the purpose of meeting an excess of expenditure. For one or two years it went down to 3*d*.; but it was borne for more than 20 years almost for the whole time at 7*d*. or upwards. I must say that there is something repellent to the mind that, having accepted an 8*d*. Income Tax for the purpose of meeting an excess of expenditure, we should now be content to leave that excess of expenditure untouched, and yet to retain our claim for the reduction of the Income Tax, which was expressly put on for the purpose of meeting that excess of expenditure. I am entirely for the reduction of the Income Tax; but I now come to a question which is vital, and which lies at the root of the whole subject. The matter is so large that it absorbs and eclipses all the other proposals of the Budget—namely, whether the proposed reduction of the Income Tax is brought about by legitimate means. In regard to this part of the subject, I desire to avoid language that may appear to imply censure, or to be dictated by political prejudice or bias. Still, I do submit to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the proposals of the Budget bearing upon this matter are not conformable to the principles of sound finance. What are those principles of sound finance? We must always bear in mind how large and comprehensive they are. Some people appear to suppose that public economy is the only principle of sound finance. I admit that public economy is a matter of first importance; but it is not the only principle of sound finance. Without an adherence to that principle, it is extremely unlikely that you will be able steadily to maintain your adherence to any other principle. There are other principles of the greatest importance. The first of these principles is that the Revenue and Expenditure should balance together year by year. Against that principle there is no offence in the Budget, provided only that you secure that the balance to the credit side is obtained by legitimate means. Another principle that should be borne in mind, and one which is not likely to be observed in the present case, is that the real control of the House of Commons upon Public Expenditure depends upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer presenting one Budget in the year, instead of a number of successive Budgets being presented in each year. That is sometimes excusable, and even necessary and inevitable. In all cases it is a misfortune, and it has a tendency to destroy the control of the House of Commons over the expenditure. In regard, Sir, to that control, I wish it were very different from what it is. It may be doubtful, in the eyes of an impartial reasoner, whether, on the whole, the Expenditure of this country would have been greater or less during the last 30 years if the House of Commons had never meddled with it at all; and if the entire responsibility for the Public Expenditure had been thrown upon the Government, without any money being voted by the House at all. It sounds like a very great paradox that I am attempting to give utterance to; but a paradoxical form sometimes secures attention for a truth which would otherwise be considered extremely dull and uninteresting, and would receive no attention at all. That is a shocking thing to say, and if that utterance is true it is a dreadful thing to say, that the action of the Representatives of the people, with regard to Public Expenditure, has now reached a point when it tends to augment instead of to restrain expenditure. But there is great reason to fear that it is the case. I venture to say that one of the greatest financial difficulties of a Government, and that which is the least popular part of their duty, is to propose to repress and to restrain to the utmost the efforts which are constantly being made by different sections of the House of Commons to press for the increase in the Public Expenditure for the promotion of their own favourite ideas. Then come the last of all these principles—and that is the duty of operating steadily for the redemption of the National Debt. This principle is, in one respect, the most important of all; because it is the one which is most exclusively in the charge of the Executive Government. By ceasing to redeem the Debt the Executive Government can, at any time, repeal taxes; and a proposition by the Executive Government to repeal taxes is one which the House of Commons is almost bound to accept. The House of Commons has no right to impose taxes upon the people except upon the invitation of the Executive Government, who are the sole champions of public duty. If the Executive Government decline to discharge the duties of the championship, it is not for the Honse of Commons to oppose their action, and, therefore, they cannot resist the request of the Executive Government to take them off. At all times since the present Parliamentary system was established, there has been a sense of the duty and necessity of endeavouring to reduce and cut down the debt in times of peace. When the first National Debt was in its cradle, no one would lend money to the State unless there was an allocation of a portion of the money lent, for the purpose of the redemption of the capital. That was something in the nature of a Sinking Fund. The name of Sir Robert Walpole is closely associated with the Sinking Fund, and, apparently, at one time he thought his fame, in a large degree, would depend upon his measures for the reduction of Debt. Then came Mr. Pitt, the great Finance Minister, and had he continued to be the Minister of Peace, would probably have been the greatest Finance Minister this country has ever seen, and so much did he feel the duty and the necessity of decreasing the National Debt that he arranged a complex Sinking Fund, although he must have known of its defects and inconveniences, for the purposes for which it was introduced. That Sinking Fund of Mr. Pitt's was the subject of discussion down to the time when Mr. Goulburn was Chancellor of the Exchequer; but about the epoch of the Reform Bill the Government adopted the principle that it would look only to annual surplus for the payment of the Debt, because it found that whenever a Sinking Fund had been established it had not been able to keep the hands of Parliament from invading it. At the same time, the Government did continue to pay off Debt in the shape of Terminable Annuities, although they declined to appropriate a given sum for the regular redemption of Debt. And now, Sir, I wish to call attention to this fact, that the objections which used to be taken to the allocation of a large given sum to the redemption of the Debt

—so far as these objections were of an economic character—have completely disappeared. The reason of these objections was twofold. Under the old system we provided that a certain amount of stock should be regularly redeemed in the market from the very time of borrowing, and that redemption of stock went on under the old lines while we were borrowing money for loans, and the effect was to lead to a large waste of public money by the double action. Nothing from an economic point of view could be more indefensible. We had also a very large amount of Terminable Annuities, and they were continually dealt in by the Government as buyers and sellers in the open market; but the effect of dealing with those commodities in that manner was to lower and depreciate the public credit. Seeing that when they were sold the buyer obtained a higher rate of interest, there were exceedingly grave objections to the old Sinking Fund and the old method of dealing with Terminable Annuities. Those objections have now completely disappeared. We now never buy and sell stock in the same market. We now never send into the public market annuities to be sold on the public account. Annuities are created, and have become most powerful instruments both for keeping the Exchequer in funds, and likewise for operating in connection with the reduction of Debt. But these annuities are in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is the seller on the one hand and the buyer on the other. They never touch the market, and the rates of interest fixed is purely a matter of computation on his part. It has become one of mere account in the books, and the country does not lose a single farthing by the tolerably effective system of operations for the reduction of the National Debt. But still there remains one principle of importance in connection with the Sinking Fund which constituted a difficulty, and that was that the principle which was abandoned about the epoch of the Reform Bill, and which was revived by Sir George Lewis in 1855 or 1856. Sir George Lewis was making a loan for the purposes of the Crimean War, and in that loan he inserted a clause which provided, if I remember the sum aright, that £1,500,000 a-year should be regularly paid out of the Consolidated Fund—in respect of that loan—towards the redemption of stock. I was one who, in company with the rest of those who were the followers of Sir Robert Peel, and in company also with the Tory Opposition of that day, who objected to the plan of Sir George Lewis. But we objected to it on the ground that the payment would never be made—that is to say, that on the first occasion when it was convenient this clause would be evaded or repealed. But Sir George Lewis, in the year 1855, carried his Act of Parliament, with the clause in it providing for the payment of £1,500,000 a-year. Mr. Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1858, and he found that he could not afford to pay this sum without imposing taxes in order to defray it. He thought that was unreasonable, and Sir George Lewis's Sinking Fund, after a brief and somewhat inglorious existence of two years, was repealed. Then came the Sinking Fund of Sir Stafford Northcote. We opposed that Sinking Fund of Sir Stafford Northcote entirely upon the ground that it was not desirable to hold out to the country promises and assurances of the redemption of the Debt which experience proved would not become a permanent reality. We were entirely, at that time as much as now, in favour of the annual redemption of the Debt. I believe I may say, as I was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time—although I say it without any personal vanity—that the Government from 1868 to 1874 redeemed a greater amount of the National Debt, by means of its surpluses and annuities, than ever was redeemed within an equal number of years. Sir Stafford Northcote undertook — what was considered somewhat bold—to induce Parliament to appropriate £28,000,000 a-year to the redemption of the Debt. Our question with him was entirely upon the form, and our objection was that his good intentions would be interfered with by circumstances. When we came into Office we did our best to maintain his Sinking Fund, and we never interfered with the Sinking Fund of Sir Stafford Northcote except for a course which I will mention, and within certain limits. That is the question of the creation of the Sinking Fund, and a rough, rude outline, but I believe a fair outline, of the position in which it stood before the country. We are now asked to invade—or, if the term invade appear sharp-edged—we are asked to diminish the Sinking Fund, and to reduce it in round numbers from £7,000,000 to £5,000,000 a-year. Now, permit me just to make this first observation, which I really hope may touch the minds of all those hon. Members in this House who have Conservative opinions in the sense of being desirous to maintain those principles and usages which have been applied at former times by persons of the highest authority, and which have been approved by the country and by the House, with happy results. We are now going to reduce, if the proposal stands as it now stands—and I sincerely trust that Her Majesty's Government may be induced to change it—we are now going to reduce the total annual provision for the reduction of the National Debt to a point lower than the lowest point at which it has stood in the recollection of any of those who hear me. [Mr. GOSCHEN dissented.] I beg pardon. When I speak of the reduction of the National Debt, I include the interest also, and refer to the total sum applicable for the purposes of the Debt. That total sum applicable for the purposes of the Debt we are now invited to say that we cannot bear—we in this country, with an estimated income of something like £1,000,000,000 a-year, cannot bear to apply to dealing with our National Debt in the form of provision for annual interest and effectual reduction—we cannot bear to apply a sum nearly so large as was applied to that same purpose in the year 1860, when the wealth of the country was not, I think, more than two-thirds of what it now is. An income of £900,000,000 or £1,000,000,000 a-year refused to apply to dealing with the Debt, and relieving and providing for the future, as prudent men ought to do, more than I think between £25,000,000 and £26,000,000 a-year; whereas, in the year 1860, that provision, unless I am much mistaken, came to £28,000,000 a-year. Is that a proposal worthy of the present Conservative Ministry? I say worthy, but I do not want to use a word that can by any means be used as a term of censure—even by implication—is it congenial to Conservative tradition? Who are the Conservative financiers whose proposals are favoured and cherished in connection with Conservative recollections? Is this a proposal that Mr. Pitt would have approved? Is this a proposal that Sir Robert Peel would have approved? Whatever may be said in other respects, I have never heard that the finance of Sir Robert Peel between 1841 and 1846 was deemed anything else but an honour and a credit to the Conservative Party. I myself am convinced that serious, reflective, and sober-minded men, in this determination to stint the means applicable to the payment of the Debt in the view of not only what is called relieving posterity, but with the view of making provision for a rainy day, and enlarging your means and resources for great expenditure when the necessity for great expenditure arises—I cannot think that serious and deliberate reflection will warrant a proceeding so inadequately corresponding to the courageous tradition of Englishmen, to the far-sighted tradition of English statesmen, or to the general interests of the British nation. I now wish to bring to the notice of the House—and especially to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer — this proposition which I am now going to utter. I will not utter it as if I were absolutely certain of its truth; but it is true so far as my knowledge goes—it is true so far as the recollection of between 50 and 60 years goes—and I believe it is true so far as the entire century is concerned. My proposition is this, that no reduction has ever been proposed to the Sinking Fund of the National Debt corresponding in principle with the reduction now suggested by the Government. Now, let us see whether, so far as we know, that proposition is true or not. I cast aside entirely the idea that the sum of £7,000,000 now applied to the reduction of Debt is an enormous, extravagant, and unbearable sum. I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion, whatever that may be worth, it is an inadequate sum, and that with the wealth of this country we ought to do more in the reduction of Debt from year to year. It is not felt by the country, it is not complained of by the country as an inadequate sum; there is no tendency in the present day to raise an outcry of its intolerable severity, and requiring us to do what I admit we might be compelled to do under pressure and in deference to such an outcry; but on the contrary, it is regarded as a wise, provident, fruitful and truly thrifty system. What has been done has been done in three forms, or at least has been done in two forms, and is now proposed to be done in a third form if the hearts of the Government are so flinty that they cannot be induced to reflect, or if nobody on this side will assist that reflection—as I sometimes hope my noble Friend the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) may possibly be inclined to do, if I can convey the necessity of it to his mind. What has been done I say is now proposed to be done by a third form of interference with the Redemption Fund. Now the form of warrantable interference with the Redemption Fund is that upon which Parliament, upon our instance, acted a few years ago, and, I think, to a limited extent, one year ago. If a very large demand for a sudden expenditure arises, and in the exigencies of a great Empire such demands may be expected to arise from time to time, then a bold and a just Government will persuade Parliament as far as possible —as far as reason and courage will go together hand in hand—to meet that demand by taxation. But it cannot go to all lengths for that purpose. The derangement of your fiscal system by the attempt to meet every demand upon the year by the taxes of the year would be such that, upon the whole, more rashness than wisdom would be evinced by such a course. Although you go as far as possible to meet the demands upon the year by the taxes of the year, yet some accommodation you must grant in order to meet the general working of your system, and such accommodation has been made from time to time. It was made by us, and very much more largely by Sir Stafford Northcote himself; but it was always in order to meet large excesses of expenditure to which Parliament had given its sanction. I thought, myself, that the Government of Lord Beaconsfield did not go nearly far enough in meeting that expenditure by taxation. I thought we went as far as we could—as far as we thought safe; but that is not the question. I want to point out to the Committee that the invasions of the Fund for the Redemption of the National Debt have been founded on those large and sudden demands for additional expenditure. Those I call, in principle, warrantable invasions of the Fund. That is one kind of proceeding in derogation of the principle of the annual allocation for the redemption of the National Debt. The second is that of which Mr. Disraeli's Government gave an example in 1858. In 1858 there was no large and sudden demand for Public Expenditure; but Mr. Disraeli's Government had taken Office under pressure, and its influence in the House of Commons was not commanding. There was no large section of the Opposition prepared to carry it through thick and thin for the purpose of a policy which they deemed to be so paramount as to require the adoption of that course. But Mr. Disraeli found himself in this condition—that he must either lay on additional taxes, or else he must get rid of the Sinking Fund laid by Sir George Lewis at £1,500,000 a-year. He chose the latter alternative. I did not blame him at the time, and I do not blame him now. It would have been difficult even for a much stronger Government at the time to have laid on additional taxes. But it is a questionable proceeding, and I am not sure that he ought not to have sacrificed himself on the altar of duty with the stern resolution of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington in the month of January last. I say so in all truth and sincerity, because no one has heard me speak of the noble Lord's views upon finance, as far as I know them, except in terms of sympathy and respect. I do not say that Mr. Disraeli's proposal in 1858 was as magnanimous and as chivalrous as it ought to have been; but there are these two things to be said. First of all, he had strongly opposed the creation of the Sinking Fund, and he was in a position of perfect consistency that justified him in moving its abrogation; and, secondly, no alternative was before him except the imposition of taxes. Therefore, whether he was right or wrong—and it is open to argument—Mr. Disraeli's case stands in a position entirely different from the case of the Government now before us. This is, I believe, the first proposal in our history, when we have become a richer people than we ever were before—because I am certain that the right hon. Gentleman will not deny that, after all allowances for depreciation of land, for depreciation of farming stock, it is the fact that the accumulations of this country continue to increase—I do not believe he will be of opinion that in any of the years we have been passing through, less than £100,000,000 have been added to the savings of the country—in most of those years much more than £100,000,000 have been added—and it is in these circumstances that we are invited to shrink from the very moderate efforts we have been making in order to pursue this wise and broad policy, supported by all our best financial authorities, of applying considerable and sensible amounts to the reduction of the National Debt. The last stroke in the case is this. It is a case of *Et tu Brute.* The Sinking Fund of Sir Stafford Northcote is going to be invaded by the representatives of Sir Stafford Northcote, by the men of his Party—nay, in a large majority, I believe, by the individuals who were his Colleagues, and who induced Parliament to establish that Sinking Fund. Is it possible to dwell, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is inclined to dwell, on such a doctrine that to exact an excessive payment in reduction of the National Debt is to endanger the principle of reduction altogether? Surely, Sir—and I hope it will not be deemed offensive if I say it—it is a fanciful doctrine ingeniously concocted to meet a case. Is this £7,000,000 a-year an exaggerated sum? I say that it ought not only not to endanger the principle, but that *de facto* it is not endangering the principle. There has been no movement of the public mind against it. What is it the right hon. Gentleman proposes to do? He is not doing it in obedience to any public demand; he is doing it certainly in derogation of the act of his own Predecessor in the Party with which he is at present co-operating, and with which, I presume, he will continue to co-operate, and by the side of men who were in the Cabinet that established this Sinking Fund. The right hon. Gentleman says—"Let us reduce the Sinking Fund to a moderate amount, and then it will be safe." What is a moderate amount? Has the right hon. Gentleman anything to go by for fixing the moderation of the amount, except his own private judgment? If one Chancellor of the Exchequer may seek to make the reduction of the Sinking Fund from £7,000,000 to £5,000,000, in order to relieve the payers of Income Tax, why is not another Chancellor of the Exchequer entitled to say £5,000,000 is really too much in the present dead state of trade?—"I ask you to reduce it to £4,000,000 or £3,000,000, and I point out to you the enormous advantage you may confer by it;" aye, and possibly he might point out a much stronger case for the reduction of taxes than the right hon. Gentleman. If he were of another school of politics, very likely he may go to some of those indirect taxes that press on the industry of the country, or on the price of articles largely consumed by the people. I have refrained altogether from the use of any strong language. I do not wish to infuse an element of that kind into the debate. I see the right hon. Gentleman moving as if he were about to speak. [Mr. Goschen assented.] I am very sorry if it is so, because what I hope is that he will give the House—having already explained his proposals—an opportunity of hearing at large an expression of impartial opinion, an expression of friendly opinion—an expression of opinion friendly to him from behind me, and an expression of opinion, if possible, still more friendly from the Benches opposite. I ask him—and I do not think it is too much to ask—a candid and unprejudiced consideration of this case at a time when it has been mixed up with no political or Party element. I ask him to read the lesson of former finance, and to assign reasonable weight to the great authorities who have provided rules of guidance for the country on that great subject; to remember how in finance, beyond all other things, it is the beginnings of evil that are insidious, and that are really dangerous; how the wise, prudent man should be on his guard not to admit those beginnings, but to bear in mind the admirable feeling and judgment of the country, which has completely recognized and approved this method of reasonable effort for the reduction of the Debt, and to come to his just and impartial conclusion in the light which history and policy will alike afford him.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I had only proposed to follow the right hon. Gentleman now, because I know it is sometimes not convenient for him to remain in the House at this hour; but I hope we may have the pleasure of his presence later in the evening, although we are discussing what I venture to call a humdrum Budget. If so, I shall reserve my observations until a later hour.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I cannot answer for myself entirely. Those who are in their second half-century will appreciate my position in the circumstances.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I do not know, Sir, that it is in my power to add anything whatever to the weight and force of the remarks which have fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), with respect to the principal proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for dealing with the Sinking Fund. But as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been disposed to yield to the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, that some opportunity should be afforded to those who are in reality, and in all sincerity, friends of Her Majesty's Government, to give expression to their opinions on this matter, I will venture to ask the House to allow me to supplement a little further the remarks which I made the other night. It is not, I think, in the power of any Member on the Benches opposite, or of any Member on these Benches, to suspect me of speaking with any motive whatever than that of true friendship for the Government. I will not go over all the ground which the right hon. Gentleman has occupied in reference to the Budget proposals; but on the subject of the remission of the Tobacco Duty, I wish to put a point to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I can quite understand that on certain grounds there may be much to be said for putting back the Duty to the figure at which it formerly stood; but I hold strongly that such a remission should have been part and parcel of a large review of taxation. I greatly doubt a policy like this at a time when the right hon. Gentleman will be the last to deny that direct and indirect taxation hardly bear that proportion to each other which they ought to bear. Of late years burdens have been placed on direct taxation, whereas no increase has taken place in indirect taxation; and I doubt the policy of choosing this moment for making a large remission of indirect taxation. That is a point for the right hon. Gentleman himself to consider. He has been one of the sternest advocates for placing boldly on the people whatever expenditure is necessary for the service of the country. He has been one of those quick to point out the apparent pusillanimity of others; and I put it to him whether he can altogether defend this considerable remission of indirect taxation at the present time? I pass from that subject, however, with the remark that the Tobacco Duty is now producing very nearly the amount which Sir Stafford Northcote expected when he raised the Tax. It has taken some years to come up to that amount, and it is only in the last two or three years that it has reached it. It is now producing the exact amount at which it stood before, and yet it is at this moment, when the Tax is producing this amount, which is chosen by the right hon. Gentleman to interfere with it. That seems to me to be a questionable act of prudence, and I doubt very much whether the trade will not be greatly disorganized by the unexpected operation of the right hon. Gentleman, and I greatly doubt whether the public will derive much benefit from the remission of the taxation. The next point is the question of the Grant in Aid of local rates. I can hardly add anything at all to what fell from the right hon. Gentleman opposite; but I can add something, and this addition consists in the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. I happened to be reading them only yesterday. I spent my Sunday afternoon in examining some of the financial maxims which the present Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for, and which the country, and those who study finance, have a reason to be grateful for. Now, in 1883, there was a Motion made in this House, by Mr. Pell, for the relief of local rates. It was opposed by Mr. Albert Grey, then Member for Northumberland. It was debated with great interest by this House, and Mr. Grey's Motion was carried by a narrow majority. That, I imagine, was greatly owing to the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Pell moved for a Grant in Aid of local rates, and it was said that the ratepayers ought not to have to wait for relief from the measure of the Government for the reform of local government. Mr. Albert Grey moved, on the contrary, that local taxation and the reform of local government were indissoluble and must go together. That view was taken by the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who made a most powerful speech. The right hon. Gentleman greatly influenced the House by his speech, and the Division was a very narrow one. What did the right hon. Gentleman say? I will only read two short extracts from his speech. They are as follows:—

> "Through good repute and evil repute the Liberal Party have stood by this—that they must introduce local reform at the same time as they introduce local relief."

And he concluded in these words—

> "I hope the House will put its foot down against simply giving relief, as it had been given in the past, in a manner which afforded little relief to those who desired such relief, but which struck at the basis of those principles of local self-government which he maintained ought to be upheld."—(3 *Hansard*, [278] 511-12.)

In the right hon. Gentleman's words, I must express an earnest hope that the House of Commons will put down its foot against granting in aid of local rates this further sum of £330,000, given exactly upon the same basis, and in the same manner, as former Grants in Aid of local rates were given, and given, too, without any intimation from the right hon. Gentlemen that a measure of local government reform is about to be introduced.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I beg the noble Lord's pardon. I said that even though this is a temporary arrangement, the Government would, even this Session, bring in a Bill for the reform of local government.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I was inclined to think that the right hon. Gentleman made no reference to the question of local government reform.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; I did.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I am glad to hear that intimation. It is the best thing I have heard for some time. If the Government are going to bring in a great Bill of local government reform, such as I imagine they would wish to introduce—a Bill which will place at the disposal of the Local Authorities, when properly constituted by Parliament, resources amounting to nearly £3,000,000 in excess of what they dispose of now; a large Bill constituting popular Bodies, popularly elected, which will have not these Grants in Aid, but resources of taxation—probably £3,000,000 in excess of what they now receive—if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to do anything of that kind, then I ask, what is the use of this little morsel or sop of some £300,000, which hardly a ratepayer in the country will know of or receive a farthing of benefit from? Although it may be a general acknowledgment of the grievances of the local ratepayers, is it not rather a waste of public money to throw away this £330,000 in this manner? I have quoted the right hon. Gentleman's words, and I believe them, for when I had the honour to be at the Treasury, I came to the conclusion that nothing should induce me to give one 6*d*. more in aid of local rates until Parliament and the Government had brought in a large measure for reform of local government. I come now to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for dealing with the Sinking Fund for the purposes which he contemplates. In this matter I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman perfectly amicably, but at the same time very pointedly, what are his views on the subject of public economy and retrenchment in the Public Expenditure? I want him to tell the House fairly and frankly whether he is of opinion that the views which I have expressed as to the possibility, and the desirability, and the necessity of retrenchment are views in which he does not concur, or views in which he honestly concurs, and which he will use his great powers and influence to give effect to. In 1885 the right hon. Gentleman did not agree with the Gentlemen among whom he now sits. In 1885 he contested the City of Edinburgh, and he was then an independent supporter of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and in those days he placed himself on a great pinnacle of what I may call pure political honesty. He said that he was not going to delude or to humbug the democracy, but he was going to tell them the truth upon all subjects, whether they liked it or not, and it is within my recollection—now I come to think of it—that from the pinnacle which he occupied in 1885 he looked very deep down on such unfortunate mortals as the present Prime Minister, and such still more unfortunate mortals as myself. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had very little confidence in us, which was very painful to me, and possibly also to the Prime Minister. But what the right hon. Gentleman will not go back from, I believe, is what he said to the people of Edinburgh and to people in other parts of the country in 1885. His words were not intended to be mere words and phrases, but were *bonâ fide* honest expressions of political opinions which he would be ready to carry out if he came into Office. I ask the House to allow me to read a few quotations from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speeches on this great question of economy and retrenchment. The principles of economy just as much concern the manner in which you raise your Revenue as they concern the manner in which you spend your Revenue. You are to be economical not only in the way you expend, but in the way you get money. Therefore these extracts apply just as much the one way as the other. I have here 10 extracts, but I will not read them all. I will have mercy on the House. I take the third, which is very remarkable. In a speech which he made on October the 21st, 1885, at Edinburgh, the right hon. Gentleman used these words—

> "The Conservatives hold that such men as Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Mr. Childers, and others of that stamp, are going to betray the traditions of which they are the heirs—that they are going to throw over Gladstonian finance, Gladstonian economy, Gladstonian views of economy, and, more than that, of national retrenchment. I call that an offensive view to which I never will subscribe."

Now, Sir, I ask the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the passage when he rises to reply, to show the House how this method of dealing with the Sinking Fund for this particular purpose is in accordance with Gladstonian finance, Gladstonian economy, Gladstonian views of National Expenditure, and, more than that, Gladstonian views of national retrenchment. But I will take another passage. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The Liberal Party have been, and I trust always will be, the guardians of the public purse —guardians willing even to incur some amount of unpopularity rather than be the ruthless spendthrifts of the national resources placed in their hands."

He then went on to make a comparison drawn from private life. He proceeded—

> "Although there may be public administrators of whom it may be said, 'There is no niggardly economy there—they spend their money like gentlemen,' why do they not remember at every point that the money which they spend comes from the taxation of the people?"

These sentiments are, I think, not wholly dissimilar from those which I humbly endeavoured to express at the time when I left the Government. I come now to the last quotation with which I shall trouble the House. The right hon. Gentleman, speaking on the 24th of November at Edinburgh, said—

> "Let me pass from legislative proposals to some matters of importance with regard to the administration of the country. One great point is that of national expenditure and national economy, which is becoming rapidly less popular than it used to be. I confess that I cannot see in certain candidates for Parliamentary honours any sign that they will be ferocious guardians of the public purse. Believe me, some little ferocity is necessary."

Now, I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he rises to defend his proposal, and when he remembers these words that he spoke in 1885, how he can prove that he has been a guardian of the public purse, willing even to incur some unpopularity —I ask him to show how the proposal which he now makes in regard to the Debt, and the absence from his Budget of provisions as to retrenchment is consistent with the pledge which he gave to the people of Edinburgh that he would be a zealous and ferocious guardian of the public purse? I have prefaced my observations with these quotations, because I had felt, until last Thursday night, that, at any rate on the question of economy, I had a warm ally and a true supporter in the right hon. Gentleman. But what is the effect on economy of his proposal? I imagine that the right hon. Gentleman will not deny that part of an economical policy must essentially be the laying aside of money to repay Debt. But if for a particular purpose you withdraw from the provision which former Governments have made for the repayment of Debt, how can you argue that you are pursuing a truly economical policy? Surely the effect of the right hon. Gentleman's proposed remission of taxation, which is the purpose for which he withdraws £2,000,000 from the Fund for the repayment of Debt—the effect of that remission on the public mind must be this. There is no great embarrassment caused by your present heavy public expenditure, nor can there be any real inefficiency in the Public Departments. Obviously, the stir made by myself and others about the expenditure, the increase of expenditure and departmental inefficiency, was enormously exaggerated, and was wholly uncalled for; there can be nothing of the kind, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer this year is able to remit 1*d*. of the Income Tax, to remit £600,000 of the Tobacco Duty, and to grant £330,000 in aid of local rates. That must be the effect on the public mind. The public mind has been brought with the greatest difficulty to bear on this question of public expenditure. The public were perfectly ready to place confidence in the Government; nor did I do anything whatever to prevent any portion of the public from placing confidence in the Government on that point. But the right hon. Gentleman has dashed all my hopes on this subject. I am certain that the feeling on the part of the large mass of the people is that the whole stir which has been made about high expenditure is a stir with which they need not much concern themselves, and they will feel that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to make a large remission of taxation, they need not trouble themselves about anything else. Now, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, are those his views and wishes? Is that the frame of mind in which he made these speeches in 1885? Is it a frame of mind that will bring credit on this House, and especially on the Conservative Party—a frame of mind of carelessness, and almost of recklessness, as to the progress of public expenditure? The Members of the House of Commons are often blamed for their extravagant tendencies; but I repudiate the idea, and decline to entertain it, that the House of Commons could be economical unless the Government of the day is economical. In all the great retrenchments of expenditure in the last 35 years, it has been because the Government resolutely led the way. When the Government has a character for thrift, then hon. Members refrain from pressing proposals for expenditure, because they know that it is of no use, seeing that they have to do with a Government which has a tight hold on the public purse. Now, however, we shall have a whole group of Motions of all sorts which contain demands on the public purse. I say, therefore, that unless the Government leads the way, and puts its foot down, it is useless to lay the duty and the responsibility of economy and retrenchment in expenditure on Parliament. I shall be told that retrenchment is impossible—that there is no great retrenchment possible—and that the increase in the Army and Navy expenditure is one which the country must bear. Well, all I can say is, go back to former times. I find that in the year 1860 you had a Government in Office determined on a retrenchment policy, and the Army and Navy Estimates, which stood then at £27,500,000, were by 1865 reduced to £22,500,000, or a reduction of £5,000,000 in five years. In 1868 the Estimates were £25,000,000, and by 1871 they had been reduced to £21,000,000, or a reduction of £4,000,000 in three years. Now, what do you find in this year? Since 1883 the average Army and Navy expenditure has been raised £6,000,000. Does the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer mean to get up at that Table and say, in view of the figures of former years, that it is impossible to decrease that expenditure? Now, I challenge him frankly and amicably on that point, to say whether large retrenchments are not possible; and I invite him to declare, in view of this state of things, whether he means to contend that the action he has taken now with regard to the present Budget will strengthen his hands. I wish to treat the House as a perfect judicial tribunal, without any Party prejudices on one side or the other, and I wish to put two Chancellors of the Exchequer before them, and try their standard of finance. I will put the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the late Government—the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt)—and the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer before the House, and I will ask the House to say frankly which presents the nearest approach to the best standard of financial morality. The circumstances of the day are identical, except that the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer is a little more favoured by the increase of the Revenue. The circumstances, as I say, of the time are identical. There was no possibility of any great reform. The House was occupied last year and is occupied this year with the Irish Question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer last year had to meet a large increase of military and naval expenditure, and what was the course he took? Did he suspend the Sinking Fund for the purpose of remitting taxation? There must have been an enormous temptation to make a large remission of taxation. The Government then, like the Government now, did not command a majority of the House. The Government then was advocating a scheme for Ireland which might obviously have been advanced considerably by a popular remission of taxation. Whether the temptation presented itself or not I do not know; but I know this fact—that, so far from touching the Sinking Fund, the Chancellor of the Exchequer revived no less than £3,000,000 of that Fund which had been suspended; and the consequence of his doing that was that he was not able to make any remission of taxation. He told the country fairly, "I cannot lower the taxation, and you have got to meet it." Can the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer put his conduct in the same light? He does not maintain the Sinking Fund; he makes a grab at it. He takes £2,000,000 of the Sinking Fund, and with it he makes a remission of taxation. Well, I know it is pleasant to have a remission of taxation; but what my hon. Friend below the Gangway has to consider is whether that remission may not cost us more than the remission which you make. When you embark in unsound finance you pay dearly for it. I have been told that this is a very clever stroke of policy—the stroke of a master mind—this dealing with the National Debt in order to make this remission of taxation. Well, I can only say that my right hon. Friend was the last person who should interfere with the Sinking Fund. It is impossible for anyone to go into the Treasury and not see that great Fund at which the right hon. Gentleman has made a grab staring him in the face. There is no cleverness in discovering this Fund and in manufacturing a surplus. Anybody can do it. I do not believe there is one who has not longed to make a depredatory incursion into that Fund; but, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has pointed out, every Chancellor of the Exchequer has resisted the temptation. No doubt, it was interfered with in 1885. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had to find £14,000,000 of money; of this £4,500,000 were taken out of the Sinking Fund, £3,000,000 more were borrowed, and they proposed, had they remained in Office, to raise the rest by taxation. This is the first time that the Fund is resorted to for such a purpose; and I deplore that it should be a Conservative Government which has attempted it; and I deeply regret what has been done. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has fallen a victim to a temptation which has strongly assailed every Chancellor of the Exchequer, and every one up to now has been strong enough to resist. I do not say that there are not occasions when you may deal with the Sinking Fund other than for purposes of relieving taxation. It has four uses. There may be occasions of large operations. It might be very useful in time of war. You might use it under certain circumstances which I will not describe, but which might be supposed, to carry out large taxation reforms, which might excite against you great opposition, and by using this Fund you might allay that opposition and make a beneficial increase to your resources. But there is another use of the Sinking Fund, and I think the right hon. Gentleman alluded to it in his speech last year. I think he said he would not have proposed so large an operation as the creation of £50,000,000 of stock, if it were not for the enormous power exercised by the Commissioners of the National Debt over Consols. In fact, the Commissioners of the National Debt, by virtue of large funds they hold, may be said to control the value of Consols. It is not within reasonable probability that the value of Consols would suffer any large depreciation as long as the Commissioners of the National Debt have the control of that great sum of money. That is a weapon which might be used in connection with Ireland; and if English credit—[*Cries of* "No!"]—I do not say that English credit would be involved, but I do say that that is the last weapon in the world that you should weaken or resort to unless for a great purpose. I ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer—does he really consider that it is a great purpose he has in view in remitting 1*d.* in the Income Tax or £600,000 of the Tobacco Duty? Does he think that he will add appreciably to the prosperity of the country, or, for more than a passing moment, increase the popularity of the Government? Imagine the principle he has laid down. If the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer can do this, what may not anyone else do? He came to the Exchequer with the highest reputation that any Chancellor could ever approach it with. Others had a reputation to make. He approached the Treasury with a reputation ready made. He was the orthodox apostle; he was the canonized saint of financial purity. I am sorry to tell him that what are called the financial experts are already mourning over his fall. There never was a paper more devoted to the right hon. Gentleman than *The Economist.* Has the right hon. Gentleman read the article in *The Economist* on his Budget? When he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, I remember that *The Economist* said—"Well, thank God that at last we have got a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that, having someone over every kind of financial impostor"—including my unfortunate self—"We have at last got a recognized financial genius." I will read a short passage from *The Economist.* It says—

> "But Mr. Goschen does not intend to leave the present arrangements unaltered, and the chief alteration he proposes is one which, coming from him, we regard with the greatest regret and disappointment. He wishes to lay violent hands upon the Debt Sinking Fund, and appropriate no less than £2,000,000 of the amount we now devote each year to the redemption of the Debt. As we show elsewhere the excuse he offers for this is of the flimsiest kind, and it should take arguments far more cogent than he has yet advanced, or will, in our opinion, be able to advance, to induce Parliament to reverse the policy which in this matter it has deliberately adopted."

What has the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say to that? *The Economist* concludes a very long and able article by saying—

> "Altogether, then, Mr. Goschen's Budget is, though clever, very far indeed from satisfactory, and it is weak just where we should have expected to find the strength of so able a financier most conspicuously displayed."

I have no reason to feel any great respect for *The Economist.* It never gave me any credit for financial ability; and I only quote it as the authority which told us that the right hon. Gentleman would lead us in financial courses of rectitude and purity. It now tells us he has done the reverse. I do not know whether the Committee is of opinion I have spoken too strongly on these matters. I cannot help feeling strongly, because I feel that all the hopes I had that the Tory Party would have taken up, and would have identified themselves with, a policy of sound economy, finance, and retrenchment are shattered. We had an immense opportunity of placing before the country in the financial proposals of the year our adherence to a policy of economy and retrenchment. We are now going to plunge into the Irish Question, with which many weeks will be occupied, and financial matters are not likely to come before us again for a considerable time. A golden opportunity for showing the country what our policy was has gone. The Government have been unfortunately tempted, unless there is a glimmer of hope that the right hon. Gentleman may reconsider his proposals, to court, as it were, a little popularity which they do not in the least require. They are strong enough in all conscience on the question of the Union. Apparently to court a little popularity, under the impression that they are weak, they have been tempted to make a remission of taxation which in reality will benefit no one, but which will inflict a fatal blow upon our financial arrangements. This policy of paying off Debt has been built up by both Parties in the House through Parliament after Parliament. It has been a continuous policy, it has been added to by one Party after another, and it has never been interfered with except in times of emergency. Now we are deliberately identifying ourselves with the policy of ceasing to pay off the National Debt. I would ask the Government whether it is not possible to reconsider that particular proposal? It is not necessary for the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to touch the Sinking Fund even if he wants to remit a 1*d.* of the Income Tax. He has ample resources at his disposal. If he leaves the Sinking Fund alone and remits a 1*d.* of Income Tax, he will still have a balance of £400,000. If he does not reduce the Income Tax, and prefers to take off the Tobacco Duty, he will have a balance of £800,000. If he touches neither of these, and relieves the rates, he will have a balance of £300,000. He can do any of these things if he will only leave the Sinking Fund alone. He is touching it for a purpose so paltry and so frivolous that I fail to understand for one moment why it ever entered into his mind, and why the right hon. Gentlemen near him, and particularly the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, so easily fell into his policy. I pray the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to believe that I only make these remarks because of my intense and earnest desire that the present Government, whose career I hope is going to be a long one, may embark upon paths of financial stability.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I think that, on the whole, it will be most conducive to the convenience of the Committee that I should reply at once to the two onslaughts which have been made upon me—in the first instance, by the great veteran of financial orthodoxy, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), to whom we all look up with the highest respect as a financial authority, and, in the second place, by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), a late but very brilliant recruit to the financial corps. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian said he was not present in the House the other day because he believed the Budget would be one to which it would be scarcely worth his while to listen. I put his absence down to another reason. I thought he felt as a first-class performer feels in being exposed to the excruciating torment of listening to an inferior artist playing on the instrument from which he draws such melody himself. I say that, I am sure, in no spirit of unkindness to my right hon. Friend, but only because I feel that for one who has taken part in so many conspicuous Budgets it may naturally be a dreary task to listen to such a speech as was made the other day by me. And yet I should have been glad if the right hon. Gentleman had been present; because, after all, it is easier to catch the whole meaning of a statement by listening when it is made than it is by reading it in print. I will follow, as well as I am able, the various points which have been raised by my right hon. Friend, and so ably and eloquently strengthened by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. I am afraid it will be my duty, in the first instance, to deal with what I may call the least exciting part of the question—namely, local loans and the Tobacco Duty, turning to the larger points in the Budget—the remission of 1*d.* of the Income Tax and the suspension of a portion of the Sinking Fund — subsequently. Now, with regard to local loans, my right hon. Friend suggested that it would be unwise to issue another 3 per Cent Stock, and further suggested that it would be better to issue a 2½ per Cent than a 3 per Cent Stock. [Mr. W. E. Gladstone: If you have a separate Stock.] Yes; if you have a separate Stock. My view is, in the first instance, to issue £37,000,000 of the new Stock, in lieu of £37,000,000 of Consols held by the Commissioners of the National Debt, and that course would not involve the placing of a separate Stock on the market in the first instance; but I have not absolutely come to a conclusion on the subject. I will consider the question of issuing a 2½ per Cent Stock. There is a great deal to be said for it; but the difficulty with me is this — it is extremely important that the public should be able to see a distinct relation between the amount of interest paid by the Government on the one side, and the interest it receives from local bodies on the other. I am afraid that if the Stock were issued at 2½ per cent there might be an appearance of profit on the account which would obscure the real position of the account, and tempt those who are insisting continually upon an increase of local loans to force the Government to give them money at a cheaper rate. I do not know how far right hon. Gentlemen opposite are familiar with the controversy which has been going on. It has been said that the Government make too great a profit between the rate at which they borrow and the rate at which they lend. The truth is the reverse of that. There is an extremely small margin; and it requires to be shown quite clearly that there is only a small margin. This rather tells against the issue of this Stock at 2½ per cent; but I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for making the suggestion, and it is not too late for me to consider the matter again with the recommendation which his high authority gives it. I now approach the question of the Tobacco Duty. My right hon. Friend put a question as to whether it would be possible by any legislation to prevent the watering process which has been going on. I understood him to say we should not be so successful as we anticipated. On this question the officers of the Inland Revenue do not entertain much doubt; and I am bound to say that I believe the tobacco manufacturers do not entertain any doubt either, because I am given to understand that they are already suspending the process by which they offered the public a tobacco with a large excess of water, in view of the legislation which is now proposed. I have had inquiries made as to how long the manufacturers will continue the process, and I think I may say the trade are entirely of opinion that the proposal made will have the effect it is intended to have. I now address myself to the broader question connected with the Tobacco Duties raised by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. The noble Lord, in objecting to the change in the Tobacco Duty, speaks as if the main object in view were to reduce the duty upon one of the articles of general consumption, and he points out to the Committee that already the proportion of direct to indirect taxes seems to bear too much on direct taxation, and, accordingly, argues that it is injudicious to reduce this duty. But the reduction is made on the ground that the increase of duty was not satisfactory in its results, and that it has not produced that increase in the Revenue which it was expected to produce. I will not trouble the Committee with the statistics at this moment; but it has been shown conclusively, that at various times the increase of this duty above a certain point has checked the growth of Revenue, and that there has not been that gain to the Revenue for which the additional taxation has been imposed. But, says the noble Lord, this duty is now yielding the amount which it was expected to yield by Sir Stafford Northcote. Yes, that is so; but there has been an increase in the population of 12 per cent since then, and although there is an absolute increase in the amount of duty, it has not progressed with the increase of population, nor has it stood at the amount it would have stood at, if the increased consumption had not been checked by the increase of duty. So far, that is an answer on the first point. I thought it my duty to restore the duty to what it was, quite apart from any relief which may be given to the consuming classes, because the raising of the duty has been proved to have been a financial mistake. I should be extremely sorry to have to surrender this proposal. If the House will consent—as I hope they will—to remit the duty, I feel very confident that in a few years we shall be able to recoup the loss which we have been obliged to place upon the Estimate of Revenue for the present year. I now pass to a subject on which a great deal has been said—the question of granting some assistance to ratepayers, and every Member of this House is at liberty to call up against me any declaration I have made to the effect that the system of giving these grants in aid of the rates is a system in which there are grave financial defects. I have used strong language to that effect, and I stand by that language now. The noble Lord missed the point in my speech, in introducing the Budget, where I stated that the Government have actually prepared a Bill, a large Bill, for the improvement of local government and local finance, and I think I went so far as to appeal to the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), who was in the House at the time, to use his influence with his Friends in order that the Government might have sufficient time in the present Session to deal with that large and important subject. We are most anxious to make progress with that Bill; but I confess I am not very sanguine as to our being able to pass it this year. Even if it did pass, a very considerable time would have to elapse before those authorities could be constituted, and before those large changes in local finance to which the noble Lord alluded could be carried out. But let it be distinctly understood, in answer to what fell from the noble Lord, that the

Government are determined to revise at the earliest opportunity the whole system of local government and local taxation, and that this small step we have taken in that direction will not in the slightest degree, or to any extent whatever, cause us to slacken our endeavours to carry out the reforms which are necessary. The noble Lord seemed to think that the grant now proposed, though it is very small, was yet quite enough to impede the future action of the Government. I am bound to say we believe that our Bill will be strong enough to defy any such danger. We follow partly on the lines with which the noble Lord, I believe, is entirely in accord. I repeat that what we now propose will not diminish by one tittle the determination with which the Government mean to proceed with the question. Now, I wish to call the attention of the Committee to the fact, that the noble Lord and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have, throughout the whole of their utterances, dealt with—I do not wish to say it discourteously—generalities; they have refrained from going into the precise circumstances of the present moment to a most remarkable extent. The noble Lord has spoken of economy in general without giving the House the slightest indication of those great divisions of Expenditure where economy is possible. [Lord Randolph Churchill: I stated the Army and Navy Estimates.] I mean what divisions of the Army Expenditure. I do not wish to turn from my present argument; but I will ask the noble Lord whether he would cut down the present number of bluejackets, or whether he would reduce the number of our soldiers? I do not know whether the noble Lord says "Yes" or "No" to that question. I thought it doubtful whether the noble Lord would answer that question, so far as the Army is concerned; because, if I am not mistaken, when he was Secretary of State for India he increased the number of men. [Lord Randolph Churchill: India pays for them.] Yes; but the noble Lord knows that the depôts and the whole arrangements connected with the increase of force have increased the Army Estimates. I think I am right in that. At all events, I do not wish to press the noble Lord, who has been extremely courteous, though so very severe, in some of his expressions. The noble Lord did not answer whether he would reduce the number of men in either the Army or the Navy. [Lord Randolph Churchill: I would reduce the number of non-effectives.] We have no power to deal with the Non-Effective Vote, which means pensions. That ground again, is cut from under the feet of the noble Lord. I am sorry to have had to turn aside from my general line of argument to allude to this particular point raised by the noble Lord. I was stating that my right hon. Friend and the noble Lord have both dealt in generalities. They have not looked, or, at all events, they have not told the House they have looked into the special condition of any class of the ratepayers or taxpayers. The noble Lord spoke of my action in 1883. No doubt I resisted the Resolution to which he referred; and one of the results has been that the ratepayers have gone on hoping from year to year that they would receive that contribution towards the relief of local taxation which the House seems unanimously disposed to give them. They have had to wait from year to year; we have arrived at the year 1887, and still in this year we are unable, owing to the force of circumstances and the legislative difficulties by which we are surrounded, to be sure of carrying a Bill which would give them relief. Looking at the depressed state of agriculture, looking at the difficulty people have in paying their rates at all—and I am bound to say I have received representations on this point from hon. Members on both sides of the House—I say, looking to these facts, and seeing that we start no new financial principle at all, I do not think that the Government are to blame in proposing to give this temporary relief—because I distinctly characterize it as such—while the ratepayers are waiting for that large measure which they shall receive as soon as the Government can give it them. I think I have now dealt with the smaller offences which are laid to my charge, and now I come to a greater, which is this —Have we been criminal—as the noble Lord would almost suggest—in suspending the Sinking Fund, and in diminishing the Income Tax? I wish to point out to the Committee and the country the two separate issues which are raised in this matter. One is, are we right in diminishing the Income Tax, and at the same time in reducing the amount of repayment of Debt. That is one question. The other question, and that is the one which is mainly in the mind of the noble Lord, is whether, quite irrespective of reducing the payment of the National Debt, we ought to have sought relief by reducing expenditure. It is in regard to our expenditure that the worst part of our crime has been committed.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Uutil you reduce expenditure, you are not in a position honestly to remit taxation.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I hope the noble Lord does not mean that I am politically dishonest. Well, now, I will deal with the question of the reduction of expenditure. The noble Lord has spoken, to a certain extent, as if further reductions in expenditure could have been shadowed out in the Budget. Now, the Budget is not the proper place for discussing the amount of expenditure on the Army and the Navy, the provision for which has been discussed already upon the Estimates. The charge which is brought against us—namely, that we ought to have reduced the expenditure if we wanted to reduce the Income Tax, is a charge which ought to have been brought forward at an earlier stage of our proceedings. That, of course, does not affect the argument of the noble Lord, but it affects the argument which has been used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and by others, that the very fact of taking off a 1*d.* of the Income Tax is an encouragement to extravagance. It is contended that we ought, in fact, to keep up a penal Income Tax of 8*d.* in the pound in order to make the country thoroughly feel that we ought to reduce expenditure. Is that the position? The other day the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby—whom I do not see in his place now—distinctly enunciated the doctrine that because, as he said, the greater part of those who pay Income Tax are "Jingoes," they ought, through the Income Tax, to be made to feel the pressure of their own crime. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby wishes that through the presentation of the Income Tax paper, the payer of the Tax should be, as it were, prodded into the feeling that he is encouraging an expenditure which is much too high. But I think the Income Tax payers will be inclined to ask why they are to be the only class of the community singled out for this process of moral education. They will ask how it is that at this moment when indirect taxes are positively at a lower figure than they were a few years ago—the Income Tax ought to be kept at 8*d.* in the pound. I do not know to what extent the right hon. Gentleman gave the impression to the House, but language is frequently used as if the Income Tax payers consisted mainly of the wealthy classes of the community. I must beg the Committee to follow me—I hope they will kindly do so—very closely on this point. We have got to examine who are the Income Tax payers who have to continue to bear this 8*d.* in the pound, while no effort is made whatever to put pressure upon any other class in the same direction. I doubt whether the House and the country are really aware of the extent of the pressure of this tax. The number of persons claiming abatements of £120 on incomes under £400 in 1883-4 was 438,000. That is to say, there were 438,000 Income Tax payers with a smaller income than £400 a-year. The Committee will see that a large number of persons in receipt of small incomes have been hit extremely hard by the Income Tax. It is their case, I think, that the House will do well to take into consideration. I can illustrate this point more fully by an analysis of the assessments under Schedule D, which is generally considered to be the wealthy schedule. There were in 1885-6 under that Schedule 399,378 persons contributing Income Tax on incomes under £500, 32,033 over £500 and under £1,000, 19,250 over £1,000 and under £5,000, 1,907 between £5,000 and £10,000, 1,046 over £10,000 and under £50,000, and 95 over £50,000.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Where are these figures to be found?

Mr. GOSCHEN: They are obtained from the Inland Revenue Department. I think the noble Lord will find them in the most able Report of the Inland Revenue.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Do they profess to give the number of Income Tax payers in the country?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; under Schedule D, which is regarded as the rich Schedule. Under Schedule E, in 1884-5, there were 165,244 persons assessed under £400. Of course, that means the whole of the clerks and small officials. What I want the Committee to realize is that when you are maintaining the Income Tax at 8*d*., you are not simply putting a burden upon the wealthy classes, but upon classes where there is much pinching penury. My right hon. Friend opposite admitted that there is no class worthy of more commiseration, in many instances, than those with very limited incomes who are above the working class. Something has been done for them; but remember what 8*d*. in the pound means to men with incomes of some £500 a-year. It means £15 or £16. I would press this home, because I think it is worthy of being remembered, that what is important to a man is that there should be some margin beyond what is required for the necessities of life which he may devote to other purposes. I say that on an income of £500 a-year, £16 a-year is a large sum to pay in the shape of Income Tax; and it will not be much consolation to a man to know when he pays it that he is doing so in order to keep up the financial morality of the country, while every other class, except payers of Income Tax, are contributing less than they used to do towards the Revenue and towards the discharge of Debt. I am glad that my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian is still in the House, because I should wish to call his attention while I am on this point of maintaining the Income Tax at a very high figure, I should wish to call his attention to his previous views on the subject. Now, he has taken me severely to task because I propose to reduce the amount payable in reduction of the National Debt. What is that amount at the present moment? It is now nearly £7,000,000. In 1874 we were paying off £3,000,000; and at that time what did my right hon. Friend do—he and his Colleagues, of whom I was one? Did he propose—the Income Tax being then at 3*d*.—that in those days of prosperity the Income Tax should be increased in order to pay off more of the Debt? Did he propose that the £3,000,000 that was then paid should be increased? Not a bit of it. My right hon. Friend proposed that the Income Tax should be totally repealed.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: The right hon. Gentleman will do me the justice to remember that that was to be in conjunction with other measures.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; in conjunction with very large, most wise, and satisfactory measures, of which the increase of the amount to be paid in reduction of the National Debt was not one.

Mr. W. E. Gladstone here made an observation across the Table.

Mr. GOSCHEN: In the address of the right hon. Gentleman at that time the total repeal of the Income Tax was suggested, and other very large and important changes; but I think the right hon. Gentleman, when he looks back, will find that at that time he did not think it necessary to propose, even when he was reducing the Income Tax, to increase the amount which was being paid in reduction of the National Debt though it was a small amount as compared with the £7,000,000 paid last year, or the £5,000,000 a-year which I hope will still be paid off under the proposal I submit to the House. I trust that both hon. Members in this House, and those who may judge me somewhat harshly out of the House with reference to this proposal, will remember that, at all events, while we intend to take 1*d*. off the heavily-taxed Income Tax payer who is now paying 8*d*. in the pound, we shall still be in a position to pay £5,000,000 a-year off the Debt.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: How long?

Mr. GOSCHEN: That depends, to a great extent, upon who is likely to hold the Office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. There were some important reservations in the speech of the noble Lord which strengthened my impression that it would be an extremely dangerous matter to leave the total amount of the charge at £28,000,000. There were some passages in the speech of the noble Lord which suggested that a hand might be laid on this sacred sum for paying off Debt, if it were in connection with great reforms of taxation. Those reforms of taxation may be extremely wise; but, if they are carried out, what will become of the sanctity of paying off the National Debt? The noble Lord found fault with me for touching the principle upon which we have been acting; but if what I say is correct, he himself admits, in tolerably unmistakable language, that if there were some considerable objects which recommended themselves to him in the future, he would not have any objection to suspend it.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Is that a wrong interpretation of the noble Lord's statement?

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I am sorry if I misunderstood the noble Lord. Just now I was pointing to the suggestions of the right hon. Gentleman opposite in 1874; and I hope the Committee wtll allow me, in replying to such important speeches as have been made, to detain them for a few moments longer. I wish to call special attention to this—that the financial situation of the country now is totally different from what it was in 1875 and 1876, when Sir Stafford Northcote made his proposals which we are still carrying out, and when he contemplated that there would be the ordinary growth of Revenue. That growth has not followed as he expected. On the contrary, the Revenue has been most inelastic. And that reminds me that the right hon. Gentleman opposite has spoken of the increase of the wealth of the country, and of the population of the country; and he asks how it is that, with our immense wealth now, we are not able to pay off more Debt and as much of the interest as we did in former times? That, however, must depend upon the financial position of the State, rather than upon the general wealth of the country, and upon the extent to which the right hon. Gentleman and hon. Gentlemen and the country are willing to make that general wealth contribute to the Revenue. The very fact that the Income Tax stands in time of peace at 8*d*. in the pound shows how great a strain is being imposed upon our existing financial resources. Let me draw the attention of the Committee to the following figures. In 1874-5, when this arrangement for paying off the Debt was established, the Customs and Excise together produced £46,700,000; and if the ordinary growth of the Revenue, as compared with that of the population, had been maintained, the Revenue under those two heads should now be £52,000,000, whereas, in point of fact, they only produced last year about £45,400,000, which is some £7,000,000 less than what they would have produced had the ordinary rate of the growth of the Revenue been maintained. But I have much stronger figures yet. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) referred the other day to the increase in the Revenue that had taken place during recent years under the head of stamps; but, as a matter of fact, there has been scarcely any increase under the head of stamps properly so called during the last 12 years. Stamps, properly so called, which produced £4,250,000 in 1874-5, only produced £4,427,000 last year. The increase which appears in the Revenue returns under the general head of "Stamps" is due to the addition which has been made to the Death Duties. But when we turn to the Income Tax, we find that that tax, which produced £3,890,000 in 1874-5, now produces £15,900,000, being an increase of £12,000,000 during 12 years. Well, now, let the Committee realize that the total result of these figures is to show that, whereas in 1874-5 the indirect taxes amounted to £42,500,000, and had fallen to £41,500,000 in 1886-7, the direct taxes, which amounted to £20,700,000 in 1874-5, ran up to £34,600,000 in 1886-7, being an increase of £14,000,000 in direct taxation. Do right hon. Gentlemen opposite realize the force of these figures? The force of these figures is that at the time when these proposals were made the Excise and Customs were at a higher point than they now are; therefore, it may be said that the whole increase in the Revenue is derived from the Death Duties and the Income Tax, or, in other words, that it is the Income Tax payers who are practically called on to pay this large reduction in the National Debt. This is a point which I submit with some confidence to the Committee. I submit this—and I must protest against the course which right hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to take with regard to this question—while you are holding these heroic views of our duty to pay off the National Debt, you really confine your efforts in that direction to putting an abnormally high tax upon one particular class of the community; and I ask the noble Lord and my right hon. Friend to inquire whether that tax is fair, whether it is not affecting those who pay it most oppressively, and whether, after what they have been called upon to bear during the past two or three years, it is not an intolerable hardship upon them that this heavy burden should be maintained, and that this tax should be kept up at such a high rate in time of peace? This is a question which I wish the country to consider. The real question is not whether we are to keep up the sum to be allocated to the National Debt at £28,000,000. If that is to be so, we ought to have some general revision of taxation which will carry out that idea equitably. At the time when Sir Stafford Northcote made his provision for the discharge of the Debt he explained that that provision would be dependent, in a great measure, upon the subsequent growth of the Revenue. I base the proposal, which I have had to make on behalf of the Government, not upon any abstract theories, but upon the fact that the Income Tax rests extremely heavily and inequitably upon one particular class, who are, therefore, entitled to relief whenever opportunity offers. These are considerations which I think will weigh with the Committee. Generally, we must act up to the maxim, with which I entirely agree, that we ought to pay off a large portion of the National Debt every year. We are paying off a large portion, and we shall continue to pay it off. £5,000,000 a-year, with the Income Tax at 7*d.* in the pound, is by no means a small contribution towards the reduction of the Debt. At all events, I repeat, it is £2,000,000 more than the amount which was thought sufficient by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in 1874, when the prospects and position of the country were infinitely better than they are at the present moment. There is one more remark that I should like to make. If hon. Members will look at the whole situation in 1874-5, and compare it with the situation now, they will find that, in every respect, there was at that time room for statesmen to allow themselves to hope and believe that the Revenues of the country were going to continue to increase, that our manufactures and exports, and trade generally, would continue to progress as in times past. That, however, has not been the case. Are we to ignore entirely all that has happened during the last few years? Are we to act as if we were in the same financial position now that we were in those days? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said he thought it was a most fanciful argument; but I say that if we string the bow too tight, and continue to maintain, in time of peace, the Income Tax at 8*d* in the pound, in order to pay off the National Debt, we shall find some day that the Sinking Fund, which we want to preserve, will go with a run. That feeling has very largely influenced me and my Colleagues. We feel that it is not safe to rely too much on the willingness of the country to be taxed at so high a rate. I think it was the right hon. Gentleman opposite the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) who said it would be difficult to say why it should be safer that the total amount to be paid in respect of the National Debt should stand at £26,000,000 rather than at £28,000,000. I will tell him why it is safer—because, in that way, we can keep taxation on a more reasonable footing, and avoid the danger of a larger amount being knocked off in the end. I think it is better to deal with this matter in good time. For my own part, I attach quite as much importance to the reduction of the National Debt as any of those right hon. Gentlemen whom I see opposite. I trust, so long as I am in Office, to be able to stand by the figures which I have indicated. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington has twitted me with having departed from the principles which I laid down in former speeches. I had almost forgotten to reply to the noble Lord on this point. Those were speeches in which, to express it shortly, I dwelt on the virtues of economy. Well, I stand by every one of those declarations.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: In the Budget?

Mr. GOSCHEN: The Budget has nothing to do with them: [*Laughter.*] Hon. Members laugh; but surely they are aware that in a Budget you accept the figures of the Estimates as they are presented to you. The Budget is no place to make great professions of economy. [*A laugh.*] Well, it may certainly be made an occasion for the utterance of those generalities which frequently pass muster for performance. It may be made an occasion when you can make a display before the public and say—"These are my Estimates for the year; I am sorry that they are so great, but wait until next year—I am a fanatical friend of economy, and you will then see what you will see." But I am no friend of such prospective professions of virtue. The present Ministry have had to deal with that extraordinary Expenditure which was incurred by the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in the year 1884. In that year right hon. Gentlemen opposite came and proposed a large addition to the Expenditure, which cost us £6,000,000 for the Navy—I do not know how much more it may not cost us incidentally in other ways—and then they take us to task, and say that we are financially immoral, because we are not attempting to disgust the country by a very heavy Income Tax with the very Expenditure which they themselves incurred. Now, I ask, is it just for right hon. Gentlemen opposite to increase the Navy Estimates as they did at that moment, and then to cry out against our extravagance because we carry out their own plans. And with regard to the Army Estimates, I do not know that any great reductions were foreshadowed by the right hon. Gentleman who was Secretary of State for War when the late Government resigned. The noble Lord challenges me as to my views with regard to economy. I will give him my views of what is bad economy. In my opinion, it is bad economy when we have paid for ships to be built that we should not provide the guns with which to arm them, and that when we have provided the guns with which to arm them we should not provide ammunition for these guns. Last year the item for ammunition was seriously cut down. The new ammunition that was wanted for certain of the guns was not admitted by the late Government, and was not put into the Estimates. Now, economist as I am, I say that if you have got the guns you must have the ammunition to put into them. I am also inclined to believe that no Government should be satisfied until it has put our coaling stations into a proper state of defence. With regard to economy, I am as anxious as possible to welcome, and I am sure the Government will welcome and hail, the co-operation of the noble Lord. [*Ironical cheers.*] I did not cheer the statements of the noble Lord in that ironical manner. I am speaking seriously. The noble Lord cheered before I had finished my sentence. I say we will welcome the co-operation of the noble Lord in endeavouring to check extravagance in every Government Department, and to cut down expenditure of every kind that is not necessary for defence. If the noble Lord had read all my speeches in which I refer to the subject—I could not expect him, perhaps, to do that—he would have found that I have always spoken strongly of the necessity of maintaining efficiency, yet, at the same time, of preventing extravagance; but it is not my idea of combining efficiency with economy, that when we have paid for ships to be built, we should not provide the guns with which to arm those ships, or that when we have provided the guns with which to arm those ships, we should not provide the ammunition for the guns? I have always paid attention, since I had the honour to preside over the Admiralty, to the necessity of maintaining proper economy in that Department, but I insist that all the general declarations of the noble Lord are subject to modification when put into practice. While, as I have said, the Government will welcome the noble Lord's co-operation in endeavouring to check extravagance and careless expenditure in every Department of the Government; it must be quite apparent to everyone, that to reduce the expenditure at the cost of needful efficiency is not the proper method to pursue, and the noble Lord knows that to starve the Navy or the Army is at once to reduce their efficiency, and to provoke a panic. The noble Lord asks me to give him an assurance that I will use my utmost influence in the direction of economy. I will pledge myself in that direction; I will use my utmost influence, and I believe I shall be supported, and that I shall be warmly supported, by my Colleagues. But I will not push that declaration to the extent of saying that it is absolutely possible to reduce the yearly number of our ships, the yearly number of our men, or the yearly number of our guns. That is a matter which has to be considered with the greatest possible care and anxiety, and with a due examination of the details in connection with the various Departments in which the expenditure is made. It would be folly for us to commit ourselves rashly to the assertion that it would be actually in our power to make reductions of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 in the next year. The noble Lord quoted cases where, in his opinion, enormous reductions of expenditure could appropriately be made. So far as I am concerned, I most certainly trust that reductions will be made. I know that there are, and will be, reductions from the statements made to me by my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), and by the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Edward Stanhope). But I do not pretend to say that those reductions can be made on the heroic scale which is alluded to by the noble Lord. And if we cannot make heroic reductions, it is not possible, until we have revised our whole system of finance to continue to pay this £28,000,000 without injustice to one great class of taxpayers. I hope I have met or touched upon most of the points raised by the noble Lord and myright hon. Friend (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). I must apologize for having addressed the Committee at such length; but I felt that it was my duty, after the objections which had been urged against our plan, which I consider to be a safe and a prudent plan, and necessitated by the circumstances of time, to make the explanations which I have given.

MR. J. G. HUBBARD (London): I desire to add my voice to those of previous speakers in acknowledgment of the remarkable ability displayed in the Financial Statement of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), who comes to his Office strong enough in his own experience to take his own course unfettered by the traditions of the Treasury. My right hon. Friend will be under no obligation and under no inducement to make apologies for the ill-treatment of one class of people because other classes are treated in another direction; and he will be sure not to regard Her Majesty's subjects as mere material for taxation, because he is perfectly well aware that the happiness, prosperity, and morality of the community are powerfully influenced by the nature of the taxes to which they are subject. Now we have heard a good deal about the progress of the National Debt, and of the duty which is incumbent on the Government of the day of diminishing that Debt, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has made a powerful attack upon my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because my right hon. Friend proposes to make changes in the charges on the Debt by a still further diminution in those charges relating to the service of the Debt. I will ask the Committee to recollect the enormous steps which have been already taken in the way of making reductions in this Debt. Not very many years ago the Debt used to be called £800,000,000; now it is called £700,000,000 odd, and that is because we have been gradually and steadily making, year by year, a diminution in the public Debt of this country. I do not know quite sufficiently to what extent my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to go when he stated that he proposes at present a diminution of £5,000,000 a-year in the National Debt. I do not know whether my right hon. Friend proposes that this should be an immediate diminution, which is to be subsequently increased, or whether he proposes that these £5,000,000 should become a permanent charge. I did not absolutely gather from the tenour of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks whether the right hon. Gentleman proposes to deal with the £28,000,000 as a charge to the National Debt; but I rather thought that he mentioned the lower figure of £26,000,000 for that purpose. And if he did, I am not surprised at that. When the £28,000,000 was proposed I myself offered resistance, because I believed that the taxation could be assessed on a more reasonable basis. In my opinion, the only way in which the redemption of the Debt can be practically, and workably, and steadily pursued is by fixing on a given determinate amount, and by seeing that this fixed amount shall be applicable to the reduction of the Debt. If the Government decide on that amount, whether it be £5,000,000, £6,000,000, or £7,000,000, they should manage so to compute the Terminable Annuities that they would redeem every year £5,000,000. This is much preferable to using the balance of a fixed sum which remains after paying the interest, because the balance constantly increases as stock is redeemed. There is another subject referred to by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in regard to which I should like to make a few remarks, and that is, as to the incidence of the Income Tax. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken about the inequalities and hardships which result from the incidence and working of the Income Tax, and I think that he spoke very properly on the matter. But to me it seems that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to deal with the Income Tax, instead of taking off £1,000,000 from the tax, what he should have done was to have adjusted the tax all round. In this manner the same amount of remission would have been made, and everybody would have been equitably dealt with. It would appear that the Income Tax is very generally condemned; but, for my part, I have not observed that there is any disposition to give it up. There is one striking instance of the inequality and hardship of the Income Tax, to which I am very anxious to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The interest to which I refer is the agricultural interest which has already been mentioned in the course of this debate. The inequality of the working of the tax is felt most severely by this interest, because its representatives to the number of hundreds and hundreds are suffering most acutely. Within the last few years rents have fallen so enormously, that on many estates the unfortunate owners have nothing whatever of residue wherewith to pay the taxes levied on their gross nominal income. I consider that the position of the landed interest in regard to the Income Tax is a crying and obvious grievance. I put it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I hope I may not do so without result; that in this regard the question of the Income Tax is not to be treated simply by taking a penny from the tax, but by an inquiry which should be made into the whole matter with the view of removing the injustices, hardships, and gross inequalities which make the Income Tax a shame and a scandal to the country. I should like to mention with regard to economy, that I do not find anybody in this country or in Parliament who is in favour of extravagance, but I find this, that what the people of this country will insist on is efficiency. Thus the country must be properly defended both without and within. There must be a sufficiency of forces on sea and on land to ensure peace and order at home, and the safety and dignity of the country in its foreign intercourse. These are very necessary duties on the part of any Government. By all means let grievances and abuses be ameliorated or remedied; but for Heaven's sake let us have an efficient Army and Navy, and I am sure that the country will not grudge to pay for such necessary efficiency. I do sincerely trust that before my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer brings forward his Budget another year, he may have and embrace the opportunity of so adjusting his plans as to present the House with the acceptable and welcome gift of an adjusted Income Tax.

Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his attention has been called to the fact, that the proposal which he has made in regard to the reduction of the Tobacco Duties will have the effect of throwing out of employment some thousands of operatives engaged in the manufacture of tobacco and cigars in the Metropolis. I am not aware whether the right hon. Gentleman has been informed on this matter, but the circumstances as they have been detailed to me are as follow:—I am told that the manufacturers of cigars and tobacco in London are in the habit of keeping only a very limited supply of the raw material in stock, thus having from week to week to get out of bond the necessary quantity of raw material to enable them to manufacture the tobacco and cigars for public consumption. Now, it appears that the amount of stock which the manufacturers have in hand will be consumed during the present week, and I am informed that some hundreds, or even thousands, of operatives have been warned already that on Saturday next their services will be dispensed with until the 21st of

May, which I believe is the date fixed by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the introduction of the new Budget proposal. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to see his way clear to effect that reduction immediately, or from the 1st of May, instead of deferring it to the 21st of that month, the result would be that the thousands of operatives who have now been notified that their labour will not be required for about three weeks or so will be able to continue their employment, and such a course will certainly give much satisfaction, not only to the operatives and manufacturers of tobacco and cigars in the Metropolis, but to the thousands of persons and families dependent on these for their employment and sustenance. I shall be obliged to the right hon. Gentleman if he will inform me whether he is of opinion that the reduction is capable of being dated from the first of the month for the benefit of the thousands engaged in the tobacco industry?

Mr. GOSCHEN: The question was brought to my notice just before the House met this afternoon, and I should like to say to the hon. Member (Mr. Cremer) that it involves a matter with which I can scarcely deal myself without considering or taking advice. At any rate, I have undertaken to see representatives of the manufacturers and others engaged in the trade to-morrow with the view of obviating the danger which has been pointed out to me. I shall be very glad to receive suggestions as to the means of meeting the difficulty from anyone connected with the trade.

Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): The right hon. Member for the City of London (Mr. Hubbard) has called attention to the hardship and inequality of the incidence of that Income Tax in regard to the case of the landed interest. I would submit that there are similar inequalities and hardships in the incidence of this tax as it affects coal and other mines. The tax, as levied upon the mining property, is admitted to be excessive in proportion to other industries. The owners of colleries claim, as a matter of right and justice, that in calculating the amount of their profits for the purpose of assessing them for Income Tax, they ought to be allowed a fair proportion of the capital expended in opening the mines and making them productive. I hope that the Government will endeavour, between now and next year, to provide some more equitable mode of assessment, and I would like very much to receive an assurance to this effect. It is most unfair that the profits of mines should be calculated for the assessment of Income Tax without allowing the owners, before the sum is estimated upon which Income Tax is to be paid, to deduct a fair proportion of a fund to replace their capital expenditure.

Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has, no doubt, pursued the usual course, and I am very far, therefore, from alluding to it in any spirit of complaint; but I think we are rather at a disadvantage in discussing Resolutions which are not upon the Paper. I would like to learn from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of Exchequer whether it would not be possible another year to put the Resolutions on the Paper. I do not propose, on the present occasion, to make any Amendment with reference to the Income Tax charge on farmers' profits; but, at the same time, I should like to direct the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the point which is very worthy of consideration, whether it is fair that English farmers should be called on to pay more than Irish or Scotch farmers. If I heard the Resolution read at the Table rightly, I consider that it is an injustice, that under existing circumstances the English farmers should be called on to pay 3½*d.* as against the payment of 2½*d.* by the Irish and Scotch farmer—a difference of 1*d.*, which is very considerable. Under the circumstances when the tax was originally levied, I should like to understand clearly on what basis the calculation will be made if it [is elected to make an assessment on the basis of Schedule D? I suppose, in that case, the rate would be the same. It appears to me that the agricultural interest is suffering so much at the present time that it might very well attract the remedial attention of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Then I should like to point out, with regard to the Tobacco Duties, that even if the consumer got the benefit from the proposed reduction —even if the tobacconists gave their customers the full advantage—about which, by the way, there appears to be very considerable doubt—still, it is an advantage which will only benefit a portion of the community. I think that there are other duties the reduction of which would have been more generally felt. Thus, for instance, if the Tea Duties had been reduced, everyone would have shared in the benefit, for almost everyone drinks tea. But, besides women—and in this House consisting of men elected by men, I think the interests of the women should be carefully looked after—there are a large number of men who do not smoke, and I think that these facts should have been considered before the Tobacco Tax was reduced. Again, I am not at all sure that even those who do smoke would consider it worth while to have this reduction, or are in favour of the remission. I do not know at all whether the smokers believe that the proposal will benefit them. I feel that I could almost leave them to decide; though I do not say that I would leave them to do so at the present moment, because I am afraid that the temptation is too great. But after the year has elapsed, if we were to ask them what did they think it would have been best to do with this £500,000—to have paid off the Debt or to have smoked it away—to have less Debt or to have smoked more, I doubt very much whether even the smokers themselves would be very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his proposal. Surely there are very few people in this country who would not then be prepared to say that this sum would have been more usefully employed if it had been applied to the reduction of the Debt instead of remitted from the Tobacco Duties. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in justifying his reduction of the amount devoted to the repayment of Debt, observed that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) only paid off £3,000,000 of Debt in 1874. But the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) seems to forget that the charge for the interest of the Debt was then very much higher than at present, the interest being now very much diminished owing to the amount since paid off. Now, I would wish to add my appeal to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goschen) to reconsider his proposal to, as the right hon. Gentleman himself described it, "tamper" with the National Debt. I would put it to him that surely, under the circumstances, £7,000,000 is a very small sum to apply to such a purpose. We must all feel that in a time of peace like this that amount towards the reduction of the Debt is no such very heroic effort after all. We must remember that it is not as we sometimes think, a matter of £7,000,000 out of £100,000,000, but in reality it is a matter of £7,000,000 out of £1,000,000,000, which is, speaking roughly, the income of the country. The whole subject, however, has been so ably and well treated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and others who have addressed the Committee, that I will only allude to one point which has not, so far as I am aware, been referred to. If we were able to reduce the interest on the National Debt, we might be able to save at once about £3,000,000 a-year. Now, if we were to follow steadily and firmly in the course sketched out for us by Sir Stafford Northcote on this subject we should, in a few years, be able to reduce the interest on the National Debt very considerably. I am speaking against my own interest as a holder of Consols; but yet I am sure we have only to make an effort and the interest on the Debt could be reduced. At present the Two-and-a-Half per Cents stand at 91, and if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had adhered to the existing arrangements the tendency would be to raise the Two-and-a-Half per Cents, and then we should be enabled to reduce the interest on the National Debt. I am quite satisfied that if a firm and steady policy were pursued, in a very few years we should be able to secure this great boon.

Mr. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster, N.): I feel that I must, and in common with many other speakers, express my appreciative approval of the speeches on the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the same time, I must say that, in my opinion, there are fairer ways of relieving the burdens of local taxation than that of allocating local taxes to the districts in which they are levied. It would be much better, I think, to grant sums in aid or subsidies from the general wealth of the country. In rural places the amount raised by the Carriage Tax, for instance, is very small, but I admit that it has been wisely stated that the better way would be to take the tax as a whole, and distribute it proportionately to the local rates. It is on this point that I would like to make one remark. It appears to me that the principle of allocating local taxes in the manner proposed by some, is an objectionable one. I am glad to see that the Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) is in his place, as this is a matter which ought to be taken into consideration when the Local Government Bill is being drafted. For instance, the poor rates are higher in a poor than in a rich district, while, at the same time, in a poor district there are not so many carriages and armorial bearings; and, therefore, these poorer districts would not be so much benefited by transferring these taxes in aid of local rates. It does seem to me it would be a far fairer way of granting alleviation to local rates to get hold of the general wealth of the country, and to give a subsidy from that general wealth rather than to allocate certain taxes in the manner proposed. I do not know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will again make any remarks in the course of this debate; but, if he does, I should be glad to hear a little further explanation of the question of the rolling annuities, which, I think, was not quite so clear as some other parts of his able speech. I am very glad indeed that some assistance has been given in this Budget to local rates; and I hope that the principle of granting subsidies rather than allocating local taxes will not be lost sight of altogether. I look with great satisfaction on the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to allowing farmers to pay Income Tax on their real profits; and I trust that that will be an incitement to the farmers to keep better accounts than they have hitherto done.

Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): I will not detain the Committee more than two or three minutes, but I wish to say a few words with reference to the agricultural interest. It is with great satisfaction that this interest throughout the country has received the Budget proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. They knew well enough that they could not expect a great concession from the right hon. Gentleman; but they did look for a small concession, and that they have received, and they have received it with considerable gratitude. And I would venture to say as regards one point, whether or not the agricultural depression exists at the present moment as regards the Eastern Counties, the depression at the present moment is more severe than it has been at any time during the past eight or 10 years. There are a number of farmers who are struggling, and are now on the verge of bankruptcy; and I feel perfectly convinced that this small concession which has been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be received by them with great satisfaction and encouragement. I wish to point out to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury one point as regards Schedule D. I hope he or the Chancellor of the Exchequer will see his way to allowing this question to be brought before every Chamber of Agriculture, and before such men as Mr. Clare Sewell Read, in order to get some assistance to enable them to arrive at what would be the best form on which farmers could fill up the Return in Schedule D. Now, it is as well to point out that farmers' valuations never can be very correct. The valuation they make at Michaelmas cannot really be reliable; and I do not hesitate to say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be deceived upon this point as to the amount that will be received in respect to farmers' Income Tax in the future. But, at any rate, I hope the Government will consider this point as regards the best form for farmers to fill up under Schedule D. There is one matter that has been received with great disappointment in the agricultural districts, especially in barley-growing counties; and I regret very much indeed that Her Majesty's Government have not seen their way to make a very small concession to the tenant farmer. The point is this. Inasmuch as the last two Governments have in the one case taken off 2*s.* from the cottage brewing licences, reducing them from 6*s.* to 4*s.*, and in the other case, of the late Government, have swept away those taxes entirely; it is a matter of great regret that the present Government have not extended this concession to farmers who brew home-brewed beer for their own consumption, or for consumption on their own farms by their labourers. It is a matter of great injustice that inasmuch as labourers are now able to brew practically free of all tax and of duty, that tenant farmers have not only to pay a Licence Duty, but that they have to pay 3*s.* a bushel as a tax upon every bushel of malt that is used by them in brewing, and that, notwithstanding that the Malt Tax is abolished. This beer that is brewed by farmers is a necessity. It is a necessity at harvest time; it is a necessity in hay time and at other periods, when they are compelled to give their farm labourers a certain amount of beer to assist them in their work, which has to be carried on under great difficulties. This beer which the farmers are in the habit of giving to their labourers is perfectly pure beer. It is not heavy beer, and the labourers are none the worse for it, and it is considered by the agricultural interest as a great injustice that they should be subject to this tax—not only that they should be subject to a Malt Tax, but that they should have to pay in addition this Licence Duty. On this point I might remind the Committee the fact that in the cider-growing counties, where the farmers have no tax to pay, they give their labourers cider, but there is no tax and no duty to pay, while in the case of beer the unfortunate farmers have still to pay not only their licence, but, as I say, the Malt Tax. The malt that is consumed by these farmers is made from barley grown on their farms, and it seems to me a very great injustice that they should have to pay a tax upon it inasmuch as there is no duty on barley that comes from abroad. It is a great hardship that their own crops should be taxed to this great extent, and that they should be subject to two visits every quarter from the Inland Revenue officers to inspect their brewing papers. The loss to the Revenue, by making the concession I propose, would not be more than £30,000 or £35,000 a-year, and I earnestly hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take the matter into his serious consideration. I would only say further that the agricultural interests are most grateful to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what he had done for them in a time of very great distress. I think that his Budget is an instalment of justice, and I hope he will see his way in the future to continue to make further concessions to England's greatest interest, which is at the present moment suffering so severely.

Mr. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down seems to think that this Budget is an instalment of justice, but I venture to say that it is just because it is not an instalment of justice that it has been so severely criticized. It seems to me that the first act of justice is to take measures for paying your debts, but in this Budget it seems to me that the main proposal is that you should, to a certain extent, refrain from paying off that which you owe. The hon. Member calls this an instalment of justice, but if it is doing justice to anybody it is only doing justice to yourself. I cannot conceal from myself the fact that taking off 4*d.* from the Tobacco Duty is calculated to be more or less a popular measure on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I do not think that the popularity of the right hon. Gentleman in this respect will be confined to one class of the community. I do not think that the Tobacco Duty is a question of the classes or the masses especially. It is one of those points on which there is a community of taste between the classes and the masses; but I would wish to show even on that point that those who smoke the better class of tobacco will benefit sensibly by the reduction of this impost, while I believe that the average working man, who smokes the cheaper and commoner class of tobacco, will not benefit sensibly at all. I do not see—and it is a plain matter for the Committee to understand—I do not see, especially now that farthings are Boycotted or driven out of the market altogether, I do not see the poor man is to get his tobacco cheaper by this proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. They pay 3*d.* an ounce for it at present, but will the right hon. Gentleman's proposal enable them to get it at 2¾*d.*? Some time ago, when farthings were used, they might have done that, but the farthing now we know is practically not current, and the result is that the poor man will have to pay the same amount for his tobacco as he does now. The manufacturer of tobacco will derive some benefit, no doubt; but what I want to impress on the Committee is that there is no ground for representing to the public that the average consumer of tobacco is obtaining any relief from the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman said to-night that the manufacturers of tobacco are now going to be honest—that they are now going to put less water in their tobacco. Well, Sir, if, as is practically admitted by the right hon. Gentleman, it has been the practice of the manufacturers to water their tobacco; if it is the fact that the Officers of the Crown have not been able to reach them for the purpose of preventing that practice hitherto, how are any twinges of conscience likely to make them do it now? There is no reason in the world why they should not continue the practice. In fact, they will make more by it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says he has made inquiries on the subject of all the manufacturers of tobacco, and they have invariably answered him—"Oh, yes, we are now going to be honest, and as you have been good enough to take off 4*d.* in the pound upon our tobacco, we are going to give the benefit of it to the consumers, and are going to take 4*d.* in water out of the tobacco." Well, it does seem to me that to apply to those concerned in a guilty transaction in order to get from them an assurance that they have been at fault in the past, but that they are going to give up their malpractices in the future, is adopting a bad and a fatal policy. It is fatal, to my mind, in arriving at the honest and sincere truth. It is not only this matter that we have to complain of, but I think we also have a right to complain of the wider measures adopted by Her Majesty's Government—measures which would come more under the head of political proceedings than this. We have to complain that Her Majesty's Government, and all Governments that have had the confidence of Her Majesty, have from time to time derived their information of certain conditions and wants of the people from those who have been guilty of malpractices. I ask the Committee whether it is right that this system should be pursued, and that information should be gathered from those who are likely to give them biassed and garbled statements? Here they are seeking information with regard to the adulteration of tobacco, and with regard to the benefit which consumers are likely to derive from manufacturers who have tacitly acknowledged that they have adulterated their tobacco with water to such an enormous extent. I should have much preferred, and I think the Committee would have much preferred, that the right hon. Gentleman should have given us impartial evidence on the matter. The Committee would have preferred, I think, any other evidence than what, I think, I am at liberty to designate as a flimsy and unreliable assurance, given through his mouth, of the manufacturers of tobacco, who, by their own admission, have been guilty of the adulteration of the weed up to this. I was particularly struck by a remark made a moment ago by the hon. Baronet who addressed the Committee on this matter, when he said that though you are taking off £2,000,000 from the payment of debt, you are deriving no advantage from it, and that it is only to be smoked away. Yes; it is to be smoked away, but your smoke is to be none the cheaper. As to the other part of the Budget, we are told that the revenue derived from the operation of the Carriage Tax is to be applied towards what may be called relief through local taxation. I was listening to the right hon. Gentleman when he was making his proposal, and when he declared that he had delved into every corner and had come back with his hands full. Well, perhaps he did come back with his hands full; but when he went to open his fingers, he lifted many of them, but left one little finger closed for Ireland. He gave Ireland only £50,000, and what is it to be used for? He said it was to be devoted to arterial drainage. Well, I entirely object to devoting money to that object. I have no objection to loans being granted when you can get the slightest security that they will be used for the purpose of improvement of a remunerative class, that those who receive them should afterwards pay them back again; but I say if you have anything in the nature of a grant, practically it would be far better to give it to the poor fishermen, and not to bestow it on the improvement of the land, or, in other words, to put it into the pockets of the landlords. I do not intend at any great length to criticize the financial proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. I do not pretend to any great capacity on financial matters at all; but I do think that there is a significant lesson to this country in the fatality and foolishness of the policy the Government are pursuing, when there is practically in the hearts, if not on the lips, of all the Members of this House an unanimous condemnation of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman, and when this Committee has not the heart to speak it out. And why? Because, according to the statement of the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) the hands of the Committee are tied. They are tied because of certain great political issues that are at stake. It seems to me that the policy of this country, as represented by the discussion that has taken place, is that you are scratching your nose for fear that you may advance one iota towards the gratification of the Irish demand, for fear that the noble Lord may hamper the Government, for fear that the support of the Unionist crutch may be lost, or for fear that the alliance between the two great Parties might be affected. The noble Lord only enters into a half-hearted criticism of what he should have thoroughly condemned, of what he should have more justly and with more credit to his political views opposed tooth and nail. I venture to say it is the same uncertain sound that will proceed from these Benches, from these particular corners of the theatre I may say—it is the same uncertain sound, though in their hearts as sound financiers they must condemn the policy promulgated by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. That policy, I venture to say, is not even the right hon. Gentleman's own, but is rather forced from him by the character of the circumstances. Though the right hon. Gentleman and the Gentlemen who sit on these Benches above the Gangway in their hearts condemn these Budget proposals, yet the fear of producing a sensible effect upon the present political stability of the Government, for fear they may injure the prospects of what is called the Union, which really only means the Union between the Liberal Unionists and the Tories, for fear that it may in any way affect them, there is no hearty outspoken condemnation of the Budget which every sound financier as far as I gather most earnestly condemns in his heart. I think that is a lesson to the people of England; and as the constant dropping of water wears the stone, I think that constant lessons like this from night to night as we progress even in the ordinary business of the House, and the ordinary business of Committee when we are in Committee—I think these constant lessons, affecting almost every subject, will gradually be instilled into the minds of the people of this country, and that they will see that the Government and their allies are turning the affairs of the country topsy-turvy in order simply to maintain a ferocious attitude towards the Irish people. Sir, if I were to speak for a great length of time I could not more strongly express the views I entertain upon this matter. I do not think that all the artificial effort which is made on behalf of the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman that it is a popular one with the public; and still less do I believe that it will be a popular Budget with future historians of political economy in this country. I suppose my condemnation of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman will not very much affect him, but I heartily agree with those who say that after all the right hon. Gentleman seems to have been a huge failure. Great things were expected from him. The noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill) went out on questions of economy and retrenchment; and here is a Chancellor of the Exchequer who came in with the highest traditions attaching to his name—traditions so high that we really thought that the Tories would out-Radical the Radicals themselves in the matter of retrenchment. It strikes me, however, that the right hon. Gentleman is one of those who is going to out-Jingo the Jingoes. This seems to be his policy. He does not want you to pay your debts. He does not want you to touch the great spending Departments of the Army and Navy. He is in reality a Tory wolf posing with a fleece upon him, and is going in more and more for a policy of expenditure. When he has a chance of letting the country feel something of its own folly, as has been well suggested to him by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, he takes the false attitude of putting the country under the impression that the taxation is light and satisfactory. The method he adopts is by suspending the normal payment in discharge of the National Debt in a time of peace. It has been well pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), that with all the depression which existed, and with all the depression which still exists, in the country, that still the accumulated wealth of the country has increased; and certainly if the repayment of the National Debt from year to year could not have been increased, it should at least have been maintained at the former point. I maintain that this Budget, if Members would only speak out and be honest—if they would only declare the thoughts that are in their minds—is an unpopular Budget, not only with them, but with the country. I think that despite the fictitious and false effort that is made to throw dust in the eyes of the public by certain papers, that the Budget will be found to get more and more unpopular, and I shall not be astonished if these proposals, though, perhaps, not at the present moment, still in the future, will be the very means of annihilating the present Government.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): I desire to say that this Budget——

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present; Committee counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I must say that the Budget which has been presented by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is enough to make everybody who believes in the honesty of the finance of this country despair. If I thought there was one man in Parliament to be trusted to bring in an honest Budget it would have been the right hon. Gentleman who now fills the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and yet if ever there was a dishonest Budget it is the Budget of that right hon. Gentleman. Now, I am not going over the ground so ably trod by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington. He read to us quotations from the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman with which the House is familiar. The right hon. Gentleman has the quality of being able to put his ideas into perfectly clear and unmistakeable language, and accordingly he is in the unfortunate position of having in his own words given the most eloquent and most damning testimony against the proposals in the present Budget. I had the advantage of listening to nearly the whole of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman in introducing his Budget, and I must say I found in it very small defence for the proposals he has made. As I understand his argument in support of the proposal for the suspension of a part of the payment in reduction of the National Debt, he said there was a want of any elasticity in the Revenues of the country. Differing from so high an authority as the right hon. Gentleman, I see in the fact which he makes the strongest argument in favour of his proposal, an argument not in favour, but against, that which he proposes. I should like the Committee to go back for a moment and give attention to the beginning of the policy which the right hon. Gentleman has now interrupted. I suppose there is no one who heard the speech at the time, or who read it here—and you, Sir, who sit in that Chair, less than anyone else—who will have forgotten the remarkable speech in which Mr. John Stuart Mill for the first time aroused this country to a real sense of its financial position. Mr. John Stuart Mill pointed out that while the liabilities of the country remain stationary, or were largely increasing, the resources of the country were liable to reduction, were liable to steadily diminish; and what Mr. Mill said then was, and what remains just as true now as it was in his day, that we were bound as faithful guardians and custodians of the finances of the country to leave the country small liabilities, because we were leaving it small assets. Now, I ask how that theory squares with the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer? He says that the Revenue does not show elasticity, or, in other words, that the wealth-producing power of the country, instead of showing a tendency to increase, shows rather a tendency to diminish; and because the Revenue of the country shows rather a tendency to diminish, he founds an argument upon it towards arresting the payment of the Debt which we are to leave to the country. Why, that, Sir, appears to me to be the most illogical and even the most absurd argument that was ever addressed by a man in the position of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the House of Commons. I would put it in the best way, and say that the very fact that our Revenue shows no sign of elasticity makes it more our duty to leave a greater clearness from debt to the people who come after us. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was able to point out that the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not only bad in itself, but was not justified by any precedent on the part, if I remember rightly, of any Liberal, or even of any Tory Predecessor, in the position of the right hon. Gentleman. He is able to point out, that when a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself compelled to pause in the admirable work of paying off the National Debt, he had an ample apology for that course in some extraordinary or even gigantic demand on the resources of the country through an unforeseen and great emergency. I hold that it is but in order to meet a great loan, or in order to pay a great Vote of Credit caused by preparations for war or the danger of war—I hold that it is only on a precedent drawn from a circumstance of that description, which would entitle the Chancellor of the Exchequer to interfere with the fund for the payment of the National Debt. We are at peace, and, in spite of our having a Tory Ministry, I am hopeful that we may remain at peace. Perhaps that may be one of those many hopes that are destined not to be realized; but I found that hope mainly on the fact that though the Tories are in Office, the Liberal Unionists are in power. As, however, I have seen almost every Liberal principle abandoned this Session by the Liberal Unionists, I am not perfectly assured that we may not have the Government proposing some entirely unjust and causeless war amidst the ringing cheers of their faithful supporters, the Liberal Unionists; but I would fain go on in the hope, seeing the Liberal Unionists are in power, that in spite of the fact that they are such close allies of the Tory Government, we shall not be called upon to go to war, at least for some time to come. Therefore, we are face to face with this fact, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer pauses in the payment of our Debt in the midst of peace, or, in other words, adopts a war measure at a time when the tranquillity of the country is assured, and there is a prospect of peace being maintained for some considerable time to come. I should like to ask hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House who are intending to support this action on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if they think it probable that this country will remain at peace? It may be that if a Liberal Government were in Office at the present moment, recent events in Afghanistan would afford the hon. Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett) material for daily interrogation of Ministers and for speeches throughout the country, declaring that the glory of the Empire was about to fade, and that the safety of India and the integrity of the Empire were at stake and were being sacrificed. Well, Sir, the Member for the Eccleshall Division is, happily for the country, muzzled for the present by having a position in the Government. Therefore, we are able to look upon affairs in Afghanistan with a certain amount of tranquillity; but it may be that by-and-bye we shall have another Afghan scare. It may be that by-and-bye we shall have the Tory Party again putting the Ministry of the day on the daily rack of imprudent and unjustifiable interrogation, and we may, as a consequence, have another large Vote of Credit. Well, Sir, what provision are we making for that period? We are making provision for a period like that by exhausting our resources at the present moment, and by ceasing in the great work of leaving to the future generations of this country something like a reasonable amount of debt. I am surprised that of all the people in the world the right hon. Gentleman the present Chancellor of the Exchequer should have adopted such a profligate course of financial extravagance. In season and out of season, against Tories and against

Liberals, against his political opponents and against his political friends, he has preached the great doctrine of honest finance. I do not think the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington much exaggerated when he said the right hon. Gentleman has hitherto been regarded not merely as the apostle, but as the canonized saint of finance; though the noble Lord's theology is inaccurate, for at least a century is required to pass before a canonization is contemplated by the Church in which that ceremony takes place, and I am afraid that when the century has passed away few of us will have any chance of even making a claim for canonization, especially for finance and our other proceedings in this Assembly. But here we have now the saint of finance, the Pope of finance, absolutely stepping down from his throne with the three crowns and becoming schismatic on the question of finance. Why has the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer done this? "Evil communications corrupt good manners"—that is a quotation which has been rather a favourite of late; I believe it has been applied to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) in connection with his association with hon. Members belonging to the Party with which I usually Act. But I should be sorry if the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian could point to such a degradation of his political principles, and such a departure from all his life-long political preachings, as we are able to point to in the case of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer since he became a Member of a Tory Government. Why has been this interruption in the payment of the National Debt, because the right hon. Gentleman has become a Tory Democrat; and a Tory Democrat means a man who opposes all real progress and all genuine reform, and offers instead a series of sops to the appetites and to the prejudices of the public. The right hon. Gentleman pauses in the redemption of the National Debt. Why? Because by so doing he is able to deceive the public by a series of small diminutions in their taxes. If the right hon. Gentleman were free from the trammels in which he has involved himself, if he were sitting on the Front Opposition Bench as a Liberal, we can all imagine the indignant eloquence, the fervid rhetoric, and the romantic enthusiasm with which he would describe as infamous the Budget of a profligate Tory Minister who brought forward proposals of this kind. What are the sops the right hon. Gentleman has given to the public? He takes 1*d.* off the Income Tax. As one who pays a small amount towards that taxation, I should feel a little grateful for the remission if I thought it were purchased fairly; but so long as the tax remains in its present position it will be illogical, unjust and unfair; so long as the Income Tax does not make a distinction between the property which has been handed down from father to son for generations, and will be so transmitted during future generations, and the poor, transitory and uncertain income which a professional man makes out of his own brain, and loses with his own death—so long as Income Tax does not make a distinction between incomes of these kinds, it will be an illogical and an unjust tax, pressing heavily where taxation ought to press lightly, and pressing lightly where it ought to press heavily. I cannot look upon the reduction of the Income Tax as sufficient compensation for our dishonesty in leaving to future generations the Debt undiminished; but then are we to look for compensation to the dole, as it has been properly called, in the shape of Carriage Tax. I must say that if I were in the right hon. Gentleman's position I would have blushed when I heard the quotations from my speeches made by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, in reference to the impregnable union which should exist between local taxation and local self-government. What is the answer of the right hon. Gentleman? We hear of a Local Government Bill that is still in the future. I venture to doubt whether that Local Government Bill will ever be proposed; and I have still greater doubt whether that Local Government Bill will ever be passed. Nothing will please me better than to see the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues get all the facilities we can give them for the production of their Local Self-government Bill, for I am perfectly sure that it will be either so Radical as to be sure of rejection by hon. Members opposite, or so reactionary as to be sure of rejection by hon. Members on this side of the House. But on the strength of a *paulo post futurum*, uncertain, problematical, self-government Bill, the right hon. Gentleman tramples on all his previous speeches as to local taxation and local self-government going together. The final consolation for this dishonest evasion of our duty is the reduction of the Tobacco Duty. I am glad to see a reduction on the necessaries, and on some of the smaller luxuries, of life. I regard smoking as a stupid and rather unhealthy habit; tobacco is only fit for people who have good nerves, and I sympathise with the desire of such people to obtain that tranquillity from the weed which never produces anything in me but excitement and irritability. But, nevertheless, I want to know where the relief in the shape of tobacco comes. The right hon. Gentleman acknowledges that the relief will not come to the person who smokes the tobacco. Of what interest is it to us to know that the manufacturers of tobacco—who are an extremely wealthy body of men as a rule—will make more money. Will it reduce the price of the ounce or the half-ounce to the poor artizan who finds in tobacco a substitute sometimes for breakfast and a tranquillizer in the evening? On the contrary, the working man who pays 3*d*. an ounce for his tobacco now will pay that price for it in the future. Either the right hon. Gentleman has done too much or too little; if he had reduced the tax on tobacco to such a point as would have enabled the working man to get his ounce of tobacco for 2*d*. or 2½*d*., then I say the right hon. Gentleman would really have made a concession to the working classes of this country. When he leaves the reduction of the taxation at such a point as to leave the price of tobacco to the working man exactly as before, I say relief is given to a class which does not want it, and is withheld from the class which does require it. I do not mean to occupy the time of the Committee any longer; but I have, I think, set forth very proper objections to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. I am the more encouraged to bring my observations to a close from the knowledge of the fact that this is not the last occasion on which we shall have a struggle with the right hon. Gentleman on his financial proposals. He cannot himself be unconscious of the fact that these proposals have not met with a favourable reception in the country. Even his body organ in the Press has denounced his proposals, and if it were not for the fact that hon. Gentlemen behind him know he is one of the ablest remaining partitions between them and destruction, his proposals would meet with as strong opposition from them as they do from hon. Members on these Benches.

Mr. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham): The hon. Gentleman the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) has enlivened his speech with some very familiar taunts against the Liberal Unionists, which now crop up as often as Mr. Dick's memorial. But the hon. Member has also said some strong things about this Budget. He said, in the first place, it had been condemned by the country; I should say that there has not been a Budget of late years which has been received with so much favour by all the different classes of the country. The hon. Member also very much misinterpreted the argument used by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen). The right hon. Gentleman said that in the present state of depression of trade which has prevailed for some years past the Revenue is very inelastic, and therefore it is well to give the taxpayers some relief. But the hon. Member thinks that if the Revenue is inelastic that is a reason why you should try and get more out of the taxpayers. According to that argument the less money people have the more the Chancellor of the Exchequer should take from them. Again, the hon. Member said, suppose wars arise; the Income Tax is the great engine you use as relief in case of war; but if you now do not pay off the Debt you will have heavier burdens to be paid off in time of war. Surely, if you reduce the Income Tax by 1*d*. and leave the money in the pockets of the people their resources are greater, and when we call upon the country for some great expenditure the better able will it be to bear it. We have heard to-night a speech from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) which seems to have given the cue to the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool to denounce this Budget as a dishonest Budget. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian is an eminent authority, and we all listened to him with the respect that any speech coming from him deserves; but I must say that to-night when I listened to him I was struck less by the force of his argument than with the versatility of his financial genius. The right hon. Gentleman has not always acted up to the lofty and rigid standard of financial orthodoxy which he now sets before the House. What was his own conduct in that period of leaps and bounds when he was at the Exchequer? Was he in the habit of devoting all his surplus to the payment of Debt? When he had one of those surpluses at the time the Treasury was overflowing with wealth and the only difficulty was to know what to do with the surplus, did the right hon. Gentleman devote his funds to the payment of the National Debt? We all know he acted in what he considered a much more judicious manner—he devoted the surplus to remitting many taxes which pressed heavily on the country. If hon. Members wished it I could give particulars from a large number of Budgets for which the right hon. Gentleman was responsible, when he had very considerable surpluses, and when he used the money for the reduction of taxation. The right hon. Gentleman has been virtuously indignant this evening because, he says, we have lost the old finance of English statesmen, and we are actually afraid of maintaining the Income Tax at the poundage which was thought not very high some 45 years ago, when Sir Robert Peel first introduced the tax; and we are told that this tax was placed at 7*d.* in the pound. One might think that if the right hon. Gentleman was so exceedingly anxious to pay off the National Debt he would, while he controlled the finances of the country, have maintained the Income Tax at least at 7*d.* in order that he might devote the money he got in that way towards paying off large amounts of Debt. But what did he do? Let me give the Committee figures from one or two of his Budgets, and show what he did with his money. In 1863-4 the right hon. Gentleman had a surplus of £3,750,000, and he immediately reduced the Income Tax 2*d.* in the pound. In 1864-5 he had a surplus of £2,500,000, and he reduced the Income Tax by 1*d.* Then we had Mr. Lowe as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of course at that time the right. hon Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was as much responsible for Mr. Lowe's Budget as he had been for his own previously. In 1872-3, Mr. Lowe had a surplus of £3,600,000, and he reduced the Income Tax by 2*d.* in the pound—namely, from 6*d.* to 4*d.*—the cost of which operation to the Revenue was £2,700,000. Such was the financial policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian while he was in Office. But look what a different tale he has to tell now, when other men have the responsibility of administering the finance of the country. Let me ask the Committee to consider what are the circumstances in which Sir Stafford Northcote in 1875 fixed this figure of £28,000,000 to be paid annually for the formation of a Sinking Fund for the redemption of the capital of the National Debt. The finances of the country were then, as the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has pointed out, in a very flourishing and elastic condition, so much so that the Income Tax had been reduced to 2*d.* in the pound, and at that period the yield of the Income Tax had risen by 75 per cent. That was a more remarkable proof of the steady progress in the wealth of the country. Well, then, at that time, Sir Stafford Northcote pointed out that in 1860 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian made large remissions, through the falling in of Annuities, amounting to £2,000,000 a-year, and reduced the payment of Debt from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000 a-year. Now, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to-night has said there never has been a time in his recollection when the annual payment towards the Debt has reached so low a figure as £26,000,000. But here, in 1860, the sum of £28,000,000 sterling, which had been before that time paid towards the reduction of Debt and payment of interest, was reduced, from the falling in of Annuities, to £26,000,000 sterling a-year; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, instead of renewing these Annuities, seized upon the money and applied it to the reduction of taxation, in order to make himself popular in the country. Sir Stafford Northcote, when he determined to increase the amount to the old figure, £28,000,000 sterling, said he calculated on the ordinary growth of the

Revenue to pay £28,000,000 sterling without distress; but he never said this figure was to be maintained for all time if the people of the country could not pay it without distress. On the contrary, he said that a case might very well arise, such a case as has arisen now, in which a future Chancellor of the Exchequer might be inclined to put off the Sinking Fund; and Sir Stafford Northcote added—

> "If the circumstances of the country should materially alter, it would be only right to take steps to take off that which we now propose to put on."

I think these words show that Sir Stafford Northcote foresaw that occasions would arise in which it might be justifiable and prudent for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the amount annually paid in liquidation of the Debt. Now, the only other question is whether in the present instance a fair occasion has arisen for taking off 1*d.* of the Income Tax. I maintain that this remission of 1*d.* of the Income Tax is an act of justice which has been too long delayed. We all of us know how very severely the payer of the Income Tax has been punished in recent years. We have had a number of little wars, and a number of other events, entailing large expenditure, happening during the last 10 years, and invariably the Income Tax has been increased for the purpose of meeting the extraordinary expenditure. It may be said that the payer of the Income Tax has had to discharge the whole cost of the long series of disasters and ghastly failures which mark the record of the inglorious Administration of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. When Sir Stafford Northcote fixed the annual National Debt payments at £28,000,000, the Income Tax stood at 2*d.* in the pound. The poundage has been increased since then. In fact, I find that during the last 10 years the Income Tax payers have contributed to the National Treasury £60,000,000 more than they would have done had the tax stood during these years at the figure of 2*d.* Have the people who pay Income Tax had their means increased so largely that they could bear these extraordinary demands upon them? It was one great point in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that of late years the tendency has been towards a larger and a wider distribution of wealth among all classes of the people, and that amongst professional and trading classes there has been a general and considerable shrinking of incomes, and that, therefore, the burden of the Income Tax has been felt very much more severely by them. In fact, a large part of the capital of the country has been transferred from the professional and trading classes, who pay Income Tax, to the wage-earning classes, who pay no Income Tax at all. I think, therefore, that a very fair case indeed has been made out now in time of peace, and when we have no prospect of any great and sudden emergency, for the Government to give the payers of Income Tax that relief which they have been so long entitled to. There is only one other point on which I will trouble the Committee. It has been said that this money might have been got by economy, and that that would have been better than getting the money by ceasing to pay a portion of the Debt. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) has expressed, in very pungent language, very admirable sentiments on the subject of economy, and I am sure that if, when we come to discuss the Estimates in Committee, he can give a more precise form to his criticism, and show us where in the Army, Navy, or Civil Services we can make certain retrenchments, without reducing the efficiency of those Services, he will do a valuable work for the State. But I cannot see what necessary connection there is between the question of economy and the question of reducing the annual payment of the National Debt. If we have great economy made in the Public Service I am sure the payers of Income Tax, or the consumers of tobacco, will be happy to have a still further reduction in the amount of taxation. There is no reason why economy should not be practised simply because of the particular scheme the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has set before the House. Economy is not merely a matter of saving money, but the getting of money's worth for what we spend; and that is the economy the country has really set its heart upon. I do not believe, judging from my experience of popular constituencies, that there is a man in this country who would begrudge the payment of any amount of money to give England a strong and efficient Navy; but the public will complain — and complain with reason—if the administration of the Services is inefficient, and if they cannot see clearly that they are getting a fair return for the money they contribute to the State. Now, in connection with this subject, I may mention a point which I ventured to raise during the debate on the Navy Estimates. I noticed that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other night in his speech, and again this evening, spoke of the very heavy charge that has been made during the last two or three years for the purpose of putting the Navy on a proper footing, as a temporary and exceptional charge, and he held out hopes to the taxpayers that, now that temporary and exceptional charge has done its work, now that we have once more a strong and efficient Navy, in future years we may hope to see the Navy Estimates reduced. But I cannot gather from the statements made by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton), and by others connected with the Admiralty, during the debates on the Navy Estimates, that that is likely to be the case. I give all possible credit to the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty and his Colleagues for the good work they have done since they went to the Admiralty. I believe we never had a better Board of Admiralty or one more anxious to do its duty to the country than the present Board, but I cannot help saying that I do not see from their statements that we are to look for any reduction in the naval expenditure. I think it will be a pity if the Government encourage the taxpayers of the country to look forward to any great reduction in the cost of the Navy, unless it is intended that such reduction should be really carried out. I thank the House for having listened to me with so much indulgence, and I assure the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer of my hearty support.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): If we assume that the surplus of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) is justifiably obtained, I, for one, believe that the remissions which the right hon. Gentleman proposes are fairly distributed amongst the different forms of taxation. I think it is clear that the addition which was made to the Tobacco Duty some 10 years ago was of no fiscal advantage, and that it was too small to enter into the price of the article, and, therefore, I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman has seen his way to take off that additional duty. But I wish to point out that the right hon. Gentleman had ample surplus at his disposal for giving that remission without interfering with the repayment of the Debt. When we heard that the right hon. Gentleman had joined a Conservative Government, many of us were glad, because we believed that we had at least in him a Chancellor of the Exchequer of very great financial stamina; and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) has quoted a good many sayings of the right hon. Gentleman, which gave us reason to believe that he would show pluck in his financial proposals. I am afraid, however, after what we have heard, that we must change our opinions on that point, because he seems to desire to maintain his surplus merely by plundering the Sinking Fund. I do not wish to detain the Committee at any greater length than may be necessary for me to say a few words on that part of the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman. He says that those who oppose his proposals have dealt in generalities. I will endeavour to avoid that, and to grapple with his arguments closely. I understand that the chief argument of the right hon. Gentleman, which he urges in support of his proposal, is that when this Sinking Fund was first introduced, the burden on the taxpayers was not so heavy as it is now, and that the burden was not so heavy on the Income Tax payer as it is at the present moment. But the whole of that argument seems to me to be founded on the assumption that in 1877, when the Sinking Fund really came into force, the amount applied to the redemption and interest of the Debt was sufficient. But we are equally entitled to assume that the amount applied in that year to the reduction of Debt was not sufficient. The right hon. Gentleman in his speech this afternoon, and also in his Budget Speech, talked almost entirely of the reduction of Debt instead of the whole burden of the Debt charge. He said that in 1874 we only applied £3,000,000 to the reduction of the National Debt, and that now we are applying £7,000,000. But I think the question is, not how large a sum we annually vote for the reduction of the Debt, but what is the total amount of Debt burden. The right hon. Gentleman spoke throughout as though the £28,000,000 applied in 1877 represented a great and heroic effort to meet our Debt Charge; but that was, after all, very much less than we had been paying in previous years, and was but a poor attempt to emulate the courage and virtue of our forefathers. The right hon. Gentleman can hardly have looked back to the old accounts, and to the times when our forefathers were willing to pay £32,000,000 a-year for a considerable time, and later on for 20 years, when, even after the Income Tax had been introduced and was at 7*d.* in the pound, they were content, although the Revenue in many ways was very inelastic, to apply £28,000,000 a-year, and sometimes £29,000,000 a-year to the interest and reduction of Debt. The right hon. Gentleman now proposes to apply for that purpose only £26,000,000. In 1859, when the Income Tax was 9*d.* in the pound, the nation was ready to pay £28,600,000 towards the Debt. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to imply that we had no right in considering this matter to compare with the present position the wealth of the country as it stood 20 or 30 years ago, when the nation was paying this amount for Debt, and that we ought to look at the matter purely from the point of view of the Income Tax. I do not want to trouble the Committee with figures; but if hon. Members will refer to the public accounts, they will see that in trade, shipping, Income Tax assessments, and other matters, the wealth of the country is somewhat about double what it was in 1860, whereas the burden of taxation has actually only increased to the small extent of 15 or 16 per cent. I do not know why the right hon. Gentleman should refer to the large Income Tax we are now paying, and use it as an argument for reducing the Debt charge, because, while we were only half as rich at the time to which I have referred, the Income Tax was 2*d.* or 1*d.* in the pound more than it is at the present time. I have endeavoured to show the Committee that in former days our ancestors and predecessors, and even men of the present time, were content and willing to bear a heavier burden than is now proposed, while the wealth of the country was infinitely less and while the taxation was proportionately greater. In changing the incidence of taxation, we have, no doubt, placed more on Income Tax and less on indirect taxation. But in discussing this question, we ought, after all, to look at the amount of the taxation, and not at the way in which taxes are at present derived. The burden on the taxpayer is the same, whether it comes from indirect taxation or whether it is derived from direct taxation. The right hon. Gentleman proposes, however, that at the present moment we should pay the smallest actual sum that we have ever applied to Debt, and he proposes, taking into account the wealth of the country, that we should apply a far smaller amount than we have ever applied at any former time. The right hon. Gentleman supports that proposition on the ground that the mode by which we have of late suspended the Sinking Fund is not satisfactory. I would ask how often and under what circumstances has the Sinking Fund been suspended? Will the Committee believe that since the Crimean War we have only three times in any way suspended the Sinking Fund? I am, of course, speaking only of actual suspensions. When from 1877 to 1880 the Conservative Government rejoiced in considerable deficits, there was, no doubt, suspension, but it was not the form of suspension which the right hon. Gentleman now contemplates. As I have said, the Sinking Fund has been suspended only three times since the Crimean War; first in 1858, by Mr. Disraeli; and again in 1885 and 1886; and yet the right hon. Gentleman is so afraid of temptation arising to future Chancellors of the Exchequer, that before such temptation does arise he desires to remove all possibility of their being induced to disturb the Sinking Fund. To prevent future temporary suspension of the Sinking Fund, he proposes permanently to suspend it, so that there will be no chance of anyone else interfering with it hereafter. It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman is not entirely logical. He says it is not safe to leave the Sinking Fund at its present figure, and he proposes to reduce it in order to make it safe. But if that is so, why does he not reduce the Fund still further, and so make surer still of preventing its future suspension? The right hon. Gentleman pluckily proposes that when money is required and there is stress, it should be raised by taxation, rather than by the suspension of the Sinking Fund, and he tells the Committee that it will be a most wholesome restraint that the Sinking Fund should not be available to meet any extravagant or costly undertaking. But the actions of the right hon. Gentleman are stronger than his words. He proposes, in time of peace, that the Sinking Fund should be suspended, but that in time of war it should be the duty of a future Chancellor of the Exchequer to maintain the Sinking Fund by additional taxation. But, of course, there is all the difference in the world between imposing and maintaining taxation, and if the right hon. Gentleman is, in time of peace, unable to maintain taxation, it is only natural that no Successor of his will be able to impose taxation for the purpose of maintaining the Sinking Fund in time of war and trouble. The serious view of this question seems to me to be this—that the right hon. Gentleman is tampering with the system of Terminable Annuities. The great advantage of the system of Terminable Annuities was said to be that it was automatic—that the interest and principal were so intermingled that the public was not aware of the amount paid off; and ever since the creation of Terminable Annuities they have never, with one exception, been tampered with. This is the first instance, except in 1885, that a Chancellor of the Exchequer has come down and asked the House to suspend the system of Terminable Annuities. The right hon. Gentleman, the other night, said that he did not propose to tamper with the system of the Sinking Fund "to any great extent." I may call the attention of the Committee to the use of the word "tamper" by the right hon. Gentleman, which I find is defined by Johnson as "meddling without fitness or necessity." I think, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman has used a most proper word in describing his own proceeding. But I do not believe there is any degree in "tampering," and to tamper at all is just as bad as to tamper to a considerable extent. I am surprised to find the right hon. Gentleman falling back upon the very old excuse that it is "only a little one." The right hon. Gentleman seemed very much afraid the other night that we should pay off Debt at too rapid a rate. He said if we only "steadily persevered" in the system which he proposes, that we should pay off our Debt in, I think, 56 years, and he seemed to be afraid that it would not be long before we should be left in the deplorable position of having no Debt to pay off. But all depends on whether the system of payment is persevered in. Sir Stafford Northcote in 1875 estimated the amount which his Sinking Fund would redeem in 30 years — something like £230,000,000 if the system were only "steadily persevered in." My right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) was also going to pay off £170,000,000 in a few years if the system he proposed were "steadily persevered in." But I should like to know who is going to guarantee steady perseverance in the system which the right hon. Gentleman proposes? He cannot guarantee it himself, and he certainly cannot stand sponsor for his Successors, for if the right hon. Gentleman starts on his career by plundering the Sinking Fund, it is an absolute certainty that his Successors, following his high example, will still further pilfer the Sinking Fund. I believe it to be a most important matter that no effort should be relaxed which tends to the reduction of the National Debt. The Americans are rapidly paying off their Debt, and it will not be so long before the force of circumstances will compel them to embrace the principles of Free Trade. I then fear that England, with this great burden of Debt hanging upon her, will find it very difficult to compete in the markets of the world with the Americans as Free Traders and without Debt. For the sake of our trade, and our commercial supremacy, it is essential that our efforts to reduce the National Debt should in no way be relaxed.

Mr. GILLIAT (Clapham): I should like to bear my testimony to the remarkable ability which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) displayed in holding our attention for three hours on Thursday last to a Budget of great intricacy. I do not myself know whether to admire most the Budget itself, or the admirable answer which he made to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) upon that part of the Budget which he most strongly attacked—namely, the reduction of the National Debt. It seems to me that the whole of the right hon. Gentleman's Financial Statement hinges on two points—one, the reduction of the Income Tax, and the other, the reduction of the Tobacco Duty. These, at any rate, are the main reductions to be made. I think there is only one opinion about these in the House, and that is that they are cordially approved. I think also that the right hon. Gentleman has most properly brought before the House the condition of the Income Tax payer, and shown us that the relief has been given to a class which richly deserved it, and which is really impoverished by the present rate. In doing this, I think the right hon. Gentleman has fully established his claim that the present rate of taxation is excessive. On the other point—the reduction of the Tobacco Duty—I can speak with some little authority. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the courage which he possesses, and which he has shown in proposing to reduce that Duty, because it is now known and appreciated that it was on that Sir Stafford Northcote made a financial mistake when he raised the Tobacco Duty, in the teeth of the protestations of the trade, who made at the time two prophecies, both of which have been fulfilled. One of them was that the increase of Revenue would be counterbalanced by the loss inflicted on the trade; and the other that it would lead, in some cases, to a large increase in the amount of the water used in the manufacture. I myself know of cent per cent of water being used. I believe, also—turning for a moment to other sources of Revenue—that the proposal to increase the Stamp Duty on the transfer of Debenture Stock is one which is both thoroughly approved and thoroughly just, because there is merely a substitution for the previous stamp, and inasmuch as Debenture Stock occupies a favourable position just now, and is being accepted as a trust investment. Therefore, as it is less liable to transfer and disturbance, I consider it fair that the Duty should be increased. The next point I desire to refer to is that most admirable part of the Budget which proposes to transfer the item of local loans from the general Budget to a position by itself. I think that both the principle and the means by which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to effect this arrangement is thoroughly sound. It was, I think, obviously desirable that local loans, in which the public is so much interested, relating as they do to harbours, gas, water, prisons, improvements of labourers' dwellings in England and Scotland, and other works, should occupy a position of their own; and I regard the action of the right hon. Gentleman in this respect as eminently statesmanlike. I consider also as financially sound the proposal which I understand the right hon. Gentleman makes with regard to Treasury Bills. Then I come to the permanent charge of £2,000,000; and I cannot see that there is anything inconsistent in the determination of the right hon. Gentleman to persevere with the reduction of the National Debt, and his arrangement with regard to the Sinking Fund. I pass over the proposal relating to local relief with the remark that I do not lay stress upon it, because it is of a very small matter. But with regard to the reduction of the Tobacco Duty, I can assure the Committee that this reduction will give great satisfaction to the trade. I believe considerable mischief was done by increasing the Duty, which had the effect of destroying the business of the small manufacturers, and giving the public that which was hardly tobacco at all; and I think the right hon. Gentleman has done wisely in uniting with the reduction of Duty the limitation that the amount of water shall not exceed 35 per cent. The limit of 35 per cent is correct; but I remind the right hon. Gentleman that, as the law exists, tobacco is illegally imported with less than 10 per cent of moisture. This was found to be necessary owing to the practice of a Jersey smuggler, who kiln-dried his tobacco to such an extent that the Revenue was defrauded. It is true that the tobacco usually sold at 3*d.* an ounce is shag, and it is that class of tobacco where the right hon. Gentleman's arrangement will be felt. I will not go farther into details now; but I may refer to the fact that I have a letter from one of the leading manufacturers, who says that the month allowed for clearing out stock will be a fair allowance of time. It was not made clear in the Budget whether the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman was intended to apply to cigars as well as tobacco. [Mr. Goschen: No.] The right hon. Gentleman says "No." I do not intend to stand up and defend the protective doctrine; but I point out that there has been a reduction formerly from 9*s.* to 5*s.* 6*d.* a pound on cigars, and I think a good deal might be said about what is called the rich man's luxury and the poor man's necessaries of life. I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on his being the first Chancellor of the Exchequer who has been willing to meet a first deficiency with the view of prospective gain, and I think the right hon. Gentleman, especially in his reply to the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, has vindicated his character as an economist, which we all know he has through life professed.

Mr. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) on his statesmanlike and courageous Budget—courageous, because he has set forth to the country the real financial situation, and thought it right that the country should know the truth rather than live in a fool's paradise. I believe that our trade is slowly improving, and that we shall not feel any real benefit for a good many years to come; I believe, also, that the Revenue has not felt the full force of the depression which has been experienced up to the present time, and that under Schedules A and B we shall yet see a larger reduction than there has yet been. The landlords have been paying on the whole amount of the rents as they were 10 or 15 years ago, and the tenants have been paying in accordance with the assessment at half rents. They have then been paying on what they have not received, and although this has not yet been apparent, it will soon prove to be the case. Some hon. Members will think that I have placed this matter rather too strongly; but when we know that rents have fallen from 20 to 30 per cent, and that the profits to the farmers have been *nil*, I think it is extraordinary that, between 1875-6 and 1885-6, the decrease in the amounts paid under Schedule A, which is the Schedule under which land contributes to the Revenue, was only 10 per cent. In 1875-6 the amount produced by 1*d.* was £250,000, whereas in 1885-6 it was £225,000, or, as I have said, a decrease of 10 per cent. As a matter of fact, if the amount had been reduced 25 per cent, it would have been much nearer the figure. With respect to the farming profits, the amount received in 1875-6 was £74,000, whereas in 1885-6 it was £52,000, or a diminution of 30 per cent. But that, I believe it will be said, does not represent the true state of the case; and I think, when the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer takes effect, and when the farmer pays upon the profits he has been realizing the results will be very different. I am of opinion that the way in which farmers were assessed was injurious to them in more senses than one. If they had been compelled to keep accounts they would have known their financial position better, and there would not have been so many bankruptcies as has been the case, for they would not have lived so much above their means. I think the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman will be a great boon to the agricultural tenants, and I am sure that they will heartily thank the right hon. Gentleman for it; they will avail themselves of the advantage held out to them, and, like small traders, many of them will pay no Income Tax at all. With regard to the subvention of highways, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not think that I am ungrateful if I say I cannot heartily agree in that proposal. In 1883 I was the Seconder of the Motion of Mr. Albert Grey, and I am still of opinion that the reform of local government and local taxation ought to go hand in hand. I am afraid that any subvention given to agriculturists will prevent them urging on the reform of local taxation as they ought to do; but, at the same time, I perfectly agree that there has been great remission of taxation in other ways, and that it was time the agricultural community should get something. Therefore, I will not look a gift horse in the mouth; but I, for one, am rather sorry the gift has been made in the form proposed, and I trust we shall all bear in mind that it is but a temporary arrangement. I do not think that this proposal came in the first instance from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but rather that it came from the deputation which waited on him—the deputation which was composed of hon. Members who have gone about the country inciting farmers to look to nothing but fair trade for assistance; and if the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman in any way stops the mouths of those who are preaching this pernicious doctrine I believe that the result will have been very cheaply obtained. I will not go into the question of the Tobacco Duty, but wish to thank the right hon. Gentleman for the way in which he has dealt with the question of local loans; and if this were the only point in the Budget, the Budget would have been a great one, because it will enable us to produce order out of chaos. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will look to the question of currency, because I believe that it has a great deal to do with the agricultural question. With regard to the Sinking Fund, in the presence of so many great financial authorities—all differing from one another—I think this a question in which we should be very careful how we decide; but I cannot see how Liberal Members can object to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, because when it was made in 1875 the great financial authorities of the Liberal Party on this side of the House all declared themselves against it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) did not believe that the plan could be practically carried into effect, and moved an Amendment to the Bill before the House which would have destroyed the proposal; my right hon. Friend also the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) opposed it, and said, with reference to the £28,000,000, that the plan, in his opinion, required very deep and careful consideration, and that it was simply a plan to secure credit for a large reduction of the National Debt by applying during the next 10 years a less sum than had been applied by the late Government. Certainly I do not think that the proposal of the Sinking Fund received very cordial support from the Liberal financial authorities then sitting on this side of the House. I, for one, am not prepared to vote against this proposal when it is brought forward with the authority of the Executive Government of the time. As a matter of fact, the National Debt has been in process of extinction faster than was anticipated in 1875, and since that time the Income Tax has been increased by 6*d.* in the pound, and the expenditure by £13,000,000; and the question is now whether the House and the country will have an extra 1*d.* placed upon the Income Tax, or postpone for a few years the payment of the National Debt. I, for one, contend that the Income Taxpayers, who have borne the whole of the increased charge, have a right to some remission; and, therefore, if the Government adhere to their proposal, I shall give them my support.

Mr. SCLATER-BOOTH (Hants, Basingstoke): I have always been of opinion that there has constantly been a great deal of subterranean influence under the surface affecting the way in which the question of the reduction of Debt has been bandied about in this House. I think that the only legitimate way of reducing Debt is by applying to it the surplus of Revenue over Expenditure, and that is the mode in which the National Debt of our American cousins has been reduced. The hon. Member for the Poplar Division of Tower Hamlets (Mr. Buxton) has let the cat out of the bag in a truly Liberal spirit in saying that the great advantage of Terminable Annuities was that the object of them was withheld from the people. That may be a good argument; but it is not a good argument as coming from a Liberal Member of Parliament, who ought to address not only the hon. Members of this House, but the constituencies out-of-doors. If the people of this country were consulted, and the question were put to them whether they would have these enormous sums of money raised by taxation when Consols were standing at 102, I think they would all answer "No." When it comes to be necessary to keep up the Income Tax to 8*d.* in the pound in time of profound peace to effect this reduction, the question then assumes a very serious aspect. Let it not be forgotten that all the windfalls in the shape of long annuities falling in have been withheld from the taxpayers of the country. I look upon the reduction of the charge upon property as the most important and vital feature of the

Budget; it is one which, above all others, I desire to see effected, and I am glad that my right hon. Friend has the courage to do it. Property has borne too large a share of the public burden, and unless a courageous Chancellor of the Exchequer takes it in hand, there is little hope that it will be properly assessed. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Heneage) that the falling off under Schedules A and B has not yet been fully felt in our Revenue returns, partly because the applications for reduction of rent have not all been formally made, and partly from the construction and machinery of the Property Tax Acts, which render appeal very difficult, and a matter of great embarrassment to the public. But I have felt for some years the great danger involved in continually adding to the Property Tax, and I rejoice, therefore, to see what I may call this leading feature in the Budget; while I am comparatively indifferent as to the mode by which that result is to be accomplished. I think no one will doubt that for many years Free Trade has been of enormous advantage to the country; but I believe, if the originators of that principle looked back, they would think that some review of the sources of our Revenue might very well be undertaken. I was one of those who waited on the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) a few weeks ago, and urged upon him to take into account the peculiar condition of agriculture at the time. It is true that the question of the subvention in aid of the roads was mooted by the spokesman of the deputation; but I own that I agreed to that proposal with some reluctance, because I feared it would have the effect of displacing the question of reduction of the Property Tax from the position which it ought to occupy; but as both objects have been achieved by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer I can only express my sincere gratitude for what has been done. Now, objections have been taken to the subventions; but they have been in operation for 15 or 16 years, and I want to know what would have been the position of the ratepayers at this moment if they had been postponed until the time had arrived for the revision of the system of local government under the Bill which has been so long promised? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) the other day sneered at these subventions, and said that the rates were far heavier in the towns than they were in the country. That is no doubt the case; but the reason is that the town rates are in respect of gas, water supply, cleansing, and sewerage, which give, in point of fact, so much additional value in houses occupied, and the cost of these is in no sense additional taxation in the real meaning of the term. Now, the advantage of the proposed subvention is that it will go, for the most part, in aid of expenditure which is borne by the agricultural community, thus alleviating one of the grievances by which they are afflicted. I believe the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer connected the announcement of his gift with the expression that it represented the produce of a tax on locomotion. Matters have changed somewhat since it was my duty to examine into this subject. I believe it would result in failure and disappointment, and be almost an impossibility to assign the Carriage Tax to the Local Authorities with the idea that the arrangement would bring about an equal and fair distribution of taxation; but I am of opinion that the produce of the tax dealt with as my right hon. Friend proposes will produce the effect which he desires to see. But if the Carriage Tax were collected locally and expended locally, the greatest anomalies and unfairness would arise as between town and country. I believe that were there a measure for the reform of local government, to which so many of my hon. Friends look with much enthusiasm, it would be found that the Carriage Tax would not be to their advantage if taken in aid of local taxation. It is not my intention to occupy the time of the Committee at any considerable length to-night, partly because the debates so far have been conducted with the greatest ability, and all the points have been thrashed out, and partly because we are approaching the end of the evening and the Division. But with regard to other points of the Budget, I may say that I heartily agree with the proposal in reference to the reduction of the Tobacco Duties. I also entirely acquiesce with the proposal as to roads, and the amount paid in discharge of the National Debt. I think it a wise and statesmanlike proposal. I think there is every expectation, if we only have the patience to wait a little longer, that the burden of Debt will be reduced in a much more effective, natural, and proper way, by the lowering of the rate of interest paid on it. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the Budget he has laid before the House and the country. I believe it to be popular, and I am quite sure that it will be accepted by the House.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I should like to address to the Committee a few remarks on the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen); and I would say, what I indicated the other day, that, looking at the extreme complication of the subject, I think my right hon. Friend held our attention for three hours in a marvellously successful way. To me, who am fond of figures, his speech was a great pleasure, and I think to everyone who takes an interest in financial matters the same statement would apply; and I may say that we, none of us, during the three hours to which I have referred, either lost our time or our patience. Having said so much with regard to my right hon. Friend's speech, may I be allowed to say that I would divide his Budget into two parts—one I may call the natural part, and the other the artificial part. The natural part of his Budget was that in which he dealt with his surplus of about £1,000,000, against which he charged the loss in respect of the Tobacco Duty, the £330,000 contribution to the roads in Great Britain and other purposes in Ireland, and other small charges, leaving still a small surplus; and what I may call the artificial part of his Budget was that in which he reduced the charge for the reduction of the National Debt by close on £2,000,000, which he applied to some increased charge in connection with local loans, but mainly to the reduction of 1*d.* in the Income Tax. As to the natural part, perhaps my right hon. Friend will allow me to make one or two remarks, not in a hypercritical spirit, but really to elicit facts, and possibly to offer suggestions. There is, in the first place, the proposal to add to the duty on Debenture Stock, and to bring under the same class of security in respect of duty as shares and other securities current in the City. But I would ask my right hon. Friend if he has considered whether there were any other Stocks besides Debenture Stock, the stamps on which might be altered if he is going to make this excellent reform? I remember that the same proposal came before me in 1884, and that I did make some alteration in respect to the stamp on the transfer of foreign Stocks; but it was plain to me that the time would come when all this class of duties might be rearranged; and I think that my right hon. Friend will find that there are four or five other duties on securities which, if he is going to carry out this operation, he may include in his Bill. Possibly he is including them. He has taken the most important in the first place; but I dare say he intends to deal with some others. I would also refer to the change which he proposes to make, which I think would be an advantageous one, in the reduction of the Tobacco Duty. The increase which he proposes to take off was undoubtedly made in the time of Sir Stafford Northcote for a specific purpose, and I wish to do Sir Stafford Northcote this justice, and say that he himself declared that that was only a temporary addition, and that he hoped the time might come when the increase might be taken off. I remember his saying that in this House, and also in a letter to those engaged in the tobacco trade. I think my right hon. Friend, therefore, is only carrying out the promise given by a former Chancellor of the Exchequer. There are two points, however, upon which I have grave doubts as to whether my right hon. Friend's calculations are perfectly sound. I would point out that there is a palpable mistake in the estimate my right hon. Friend has made of the failure in the fiscal point of view of Sir Stafford Northcote's increase, and if he is mistaken in that it is not impossible that his estimate of decrease of revenue may be mistaken also. I should like my right hon. Friend to follow me in these figures I am about to quote—the Tobacco Duties increase between the years 1870-8, before the duty was raised, was about 2 per cent per annum. Since 1879, the first year of the increased duty, it has increased at the rate of 1½ per cent per annum. The figures I have before me, and my right hon. Friend I dare say is familiar with them. You may say, at first sight, that this shows the increase has not been since the duty was raised what it was before; but when you take the article tea, you will find that, whereas between 1870 and 1878 the duty on tea increased at the rate of 6 per cent per annum, the increase since 1878 has only been an increase of 3 per cent per annum —that is to say, nearly half the rate of increase of the duty before 1878. If, therefore, you compare tea and tobacco, you will find that the falling-off in the annual increase of the produce of the Tea Duty has been considerably more than the falling-off in the annual increase of the produce of the Tobacco Duty. I do not draw any conclusion from that; no one could do so, unless he is in possession of the facts.

Mr. GILLIAT: Has the right hon. Gentleman taken into consideration the increase of population?

Mr. CHILDERS: That applies equally to tea and tobacco, and it does not affect my argument. The falling-off in the annual rate of increase in the total produce of the Tea Duty has been such as to make that increase half what it was before 1878; whereas upon the Tobacco Duty the falling-off in the rate of annual increase has been very much less, and that does not look as if, from the financial point of view, Sir Stafford Northcote was wrong. I hope my right hon. Friend has followed these figures. Again, my right hon. Friend proposes, as to marine insurances, to reduce the lower rate duty. I think he said that where the rate of premium on marine insurances is 2*s.* 6*d.* or less, he proposes to reduce the duty from 3*d.* per cent to a fixed amount of 1*d.* on the policy. That will undoubtedly prevent a great number of policies being taken out in Paris and elsewhere abroad instead of in this country, especially for shipments of bullion, for he will find that those who will principally benefit by this will be dealers in bullion. But I would ask my right hon. Friend why he makes two bites of a cherry? Would it not be better to repeal the graduated duty altogether, and substitute for it 1*d.* on each policy? After all, the produce of the duty is very small, not, in its unaltered shape, £140,000 per annum; and on this petty receipt my right hon. Friend proposes to introduce an anomaly in the shape of two rates of duty. If his Budget will bear it, 1*d.* should be substituted as the duty on all marine insurances. The operation of this duty has been before almost all Chancellors of the Exchequer for a long time, and the answer given in recent years is that it is a small matter, and that when the Revenue will bear it a 1*d.* stamp will be substituted. Another suggestion which he has made is to give farmers under Schedule B of the Income Tax the option of being assessed under Schedule D. I proposed that in 1884, and I am sorry that all the farmers' friends then set their faces against it. They said then that farming was a business of such a peculiar character that no farmers could keep accounts, and that their inability to keep accounts would prevent them from making out a satisfactory return under Schedule D—that they would not be able to know the amount of their profits, and also that they would be reluctant to go before the Special Commissioners, because these Commissioners would probably include their squire and their banker, from whom they would, above all things, desire to keep the facts of their business. I suppose my right hon. Friend has had that difficulty put before him. If he can succeed in persuading the farmers' friends in 1887 to do what I failed to persuade them to do in 1884, I am sure I shall do all in my power to help him in carrying out his proposal. These are all the remarks I wish to make upon this part of the Budget. On the question of aid to roads, I have nothing to add to what fell from the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) and from my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). There can be no doubt that as the Government have now, through the right hon. Gentleman, said that they are going to bring in at once their Local Government Bill, with their power in the House it will be carried. If they are going to bring it in this year, it will take effect early next year, the new Local Authorities being then in full working order; and I should have thought it would have been better not to make this change until then, when it would form part of the general policy of transferring the levying of duties to Local or County Authorities. I now come to the grave question of the National Debt, and I want, in the first place, to make it perfectly clear to the

Committee what the origin and the history of the great endeavours to reduce the National Debt during the last 25 years has been—how much has really been done, what changes my right hon. Friend in his present proposal is making, and in respect to the exertions not of one Government, but of several Governments, how far what he proposes will affect what we have already done our best to carry out? Great confusion seems to prevail in several parts of the House with respect to the measure of the late Sir Stafford Northcote for the reduction of the Debt. People have thought that my right hon. Friend has implied that he was dealing with and reversing some great increase in the sum appropriated to the National Debt which Sir Stafford Northcote effected. But that is an entire mistake. The whole amount that Sir Stafford Northcote added to the annual Sinking Fund was between £700,000 and £800,000 a-year. It was not a large increase, and it was spread, I think, in steps over three or four years. But it was a far less reduction than had been effected by the method of Terminable Annuities carried out by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian. The charge for the Debt was increased between 1866 and 1871, by the machinery of Terminable Annuities, by no less than £1,250,000. The charge for the Debt between the years 1875 and 1878, under the Act of Sir Stafford Northcote, only increased by £700,000 and odd. Therefore, when the right hon. Gentleman tells us that the state of things is changed since this Act was passed by Sir Stafford Northcote, and that on that ground we are to be justified in taking £2,000,000 off the amount applied to the reduction of the Debt, I would remind him that Sir Stafford Northcote added nothing like £2,000,000 to the charge for the Debt—that he is now reversing what was settled at a far earlier period, and asking us to apply to the reduction of the Debt a far less sum that Sir Stafford Northcote when he took Office found applied to its reduction, and a sum far less than my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian applied when the Government of 1868 resigned; and, in fact, I will show to the House that a sum far less than has ever been applied to the interest and reduction of the National Debt, certainly since the Crimean War, and I believe since the great war in France in 1815, will now be the fixed National Debt charge. I will give the Committee one or two figures on this point, in order to put the real facts before my right hon. Friend and the country. Here are the figures with respect to the amount paid for interest and reduction of Debt, commencing in 1859-60. I have taken the year 1859-60 as my starting points. The taxation of that year was extraordinarily heavy, the Income Tax being at 9*d.*, increased in the following year to no less than 10*d.* in the pound; so that, for the purposes of my comparison, I assume the most unfavourable period imaginable. I would ask the Committee to be good enough to follow me in these figures. In the year 1859-60 the amount applied to the interest and reduction of the Debt was £28,649,000. That was just 20*s.* a-head on the then population of the country. In the year 1870-1, after my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian had brought into full operation his plan of Terminable Annuities, the amount charged for the interest and reduction of the Debt was £27,142,000, equal to 18*s.* per head of the population. I am taking the figures from the annual Return which my right hon. Friend quoted in his Budget speech—the Return commonly known as "Charges on Taxes;" "Exchequer Issues. In the year 1874-5, the year before Sir Staoford Northcote brought in his new proposal, the net charge was £26,495,000—that is to say, at the rate of 16*s.* per head of the population. In 1877-8, after Sir Stafford Northcote's Act was in complete operation, the net amount was £27,325,000—again 16*s.* per head of the population. In 1880-1—that is to say, after Sir Stafford Northcote had added to the gross annual charges of £28,000,000, £800,000 a-year to liquidate in five years the debt raised for war purposes, the net charges rose to £28,169,000, and that, also, was just 16*s.* per head of the population at that time. This year, if my right hon. Friend had not proposed to make this proposed change, the net charge for the interest and reduction of the National Debt would have been £27,680,000, or 15*s.* 6*d.* per head of the population. I cannot take from his speech the exact figure of the net charge after the Sinking Fund is reduced by £2,000,000, but it is something like £25,800,000, and this will be only 14*s.* per head of the population. Therefore, the result of these figures is this—that whereas in 1859-60, at a time when 1*d.* in the pound of Income Tax produced barely over £1,100,000, we were paying 20*s.* per head for interest and reduction of the National Debt, now, when we are far more wealthy, and every penny of the same tax produces £2,000,000, we are only going to pay for interest and reduction of the National Debt £25,800,000, or £2,800,000 less than we paid in that less prosperous time, and only 14*s.* instead of 20*s.* a head. The right hon. Gentleman said more. He appeared to imply that we now devoted an undue percentage of the taxes to the Debt charged. But what really has happened is that between 1859-60 and the present year the percentage of the whole amount of the taxes, which is allocated to the National Debt, has fallen from 47 per cent to 36 per cent. [*Interruption.*] I said my right hon. Friend had alluded to the proportion which the charge for the Debt bore to the whole taxation of the country. But in 1859-60 the amount thus contributed to the interest and reduction of the National Debt was 47 per cent of the whole taxation of the country. That has steadily fallen from that time to 45 in 1870, 42 in 1874, 41 in 1877, and subsequently to 40 per cent, until, if no change had been made in the Budget this year, the amount contributed to the interest and reduction of the National Debt would have been only 36 per cent of the taxes. The change proposed by my right hon. Friend will further reduce it to 35 per cent. Now, Sir, what is the sum and substance of my argument? It is that we have steadily maintained until now the sum required for the interest and reduction of the National Debt according to Sir Stafford Northcote's plan, diminishing gradually the charge per head of the population from 20*s.* to 15*s.* 6*d.* per head, and diminishing the percentage on the total taxation of the country from 47 per cent to 36 per cent; and now, in spite of that great diminution, and in the face of the fact that 1*d.* off Income Tax produces more than half as much again as it did then, the country being so much the more rich, the right hon. Gentleman proposes this year to make a still further reduction, and to make the amount set aside for the National Debt only 14*s.* per head of the population, and the proportion of the taxes contributed to the National Debt only 35 per cent of the whole. These, I think, are important figures, and I think they compel my right hon. Friend to say why he should this year make an artificial and unnecessary change, still further reducing the charge for the Debt, and breaking into the system which has been established now for so many years? I shall be happy to give my right hon. Friend these figures if he does not follow me; but I think when he examines them he will find that they express an argument which ought to be met, and which has not been met, because all that my right hon. Friend has said up to this moment is that we are worse off now than we were when Sir Stafford Northcote fixed the charge at £28,000,000, or at previous dates; whereas I have shown that the very reverse is the case. I was surprised at one or two suggestions the right hon. Gentleman made, in reply to the vigorous remarks of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), and one or two of those suggestions I quite failed to understand. For instance, he retorted upon my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone)—"What about your proposed abolition of the Income Tax in 1874?" The answer to that is plain. My right hon. Friend at that date said that, with the surplus annual Revenue of no less than £6,000,000, some additional charge on property would enable the whole of the Income Tax to be remitted. The retort, therefore, was worth nothing. If my right hon. Friend had proposed, in 1874, to substitute for the Income Tax indirect taxation, there would have been some force in it; but that was not the proposal of my right hon. Friend at all. In fact, both the Income Tax and the Sugar Duties might easily have been totally repealed with the surplus of that year. Again, my right hon. Friend said all that was done in respect of the National Debt in 1874 was to pay off £3,000,000. But my right hon. Friend forgets altogether that at that time the old Sinking Fund was in full operation. [Mr. GOSCHEN: It is now.] No; the policy of Sir Stafford

Northcote's Bill was practically to minimize the old Sinking Fund. In the year 1873 the nominal amount applied to the reduction of the National Debt on the old system was about £3,000,000, but really the amount was £6,000,000. [Mr. GOSCHEN: £4,000,000.] No; the real amount was £6,000,000. If my right hon. Friend will refer to the entry in *The Statistical Abstract* he will find that in 1873 the amount of the Debt was £779,000,000, and in 1874 it was £772,500,000, a reduction exceeding £6,000,000.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): The portion set aside for Redemption of Debt in the year 1873-4 was £3,150,000; surplus £870,000; total repaid £4,020,000.

MR. CHILDERS: No, Sir. I hold in my hand the Return which I have already quoted, and which states distinctly that the amount of the reduction was between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000 sterling; but what were the real facts of Sir Stafford Northcote's charge? Formerly, before the new Sinking Fund was formed, the old Sinking Fund was much larger. The new Sinking Fund was expressly formed by Sir Stafford Northcote so as to bring up the charge as nearly as possible to the actual Revenue, and that action almost annihilated the old Sinking Fund. But my right hon. Friend thinks that the payers of Income Tax have in this matter some special claim for consideration, as no considerable increase has lately been made in the indirect taxes. I must ask him to remember the time when I proposed a moderate increase of indirect taxation. He supported me on that occasion; not in speech, I am sorry to say—I regretted it very much—but he voted with me, and I know how strongly he felt, as I did. But we were defeated, and it hardly lies, I do not say in his mouth, but in those of his Colleagues, to take the objection that advantage has been given to the payer of indirect taxation, when they themselves resisted, and successfully resisted, so lately as in 1885, an increase of indirect taxation. I will only conclude by saying that I think it is greatly to be regretted that this artificial Budget, reducing the amount set aside for the reduction of the National Debt, should have been brought in in a year when it was totally unnecessary. My right hon. Friend says that this is the last year of heavy naval expenditure; that the extraordinary and special naval expenditure proposed by Lord Northbrook, which was to have been spread over five years, will have all been spent in three; and that in this year it will cease. Why, therefore, disturb Sir Stafford Northcote's settlement, when next year, on my right hon. Friend's own admission, it will be quite unnecessary to disturb it? You have unnecessarily, in this last year of high expenditure, made a change which you cannot retrace, but which is opposed to all canons of sound finance.

COLONEL DAWNAY (York, N.R., Thirsk): As the Representative of an agricultural constituency, and also as a soldier, I feel bound to protest against the remarks of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill). The noble Lord severely censured the Chancellor of the Exchequer for reducing the sum set apart for the paying off of the National Debt. He told us that no former Chancellor of the Exchequer had ever before permanently cut down that sum; but he need not have taken so much credit to himself for having resisted temptation, because he was never tempted. Happily for the security of the Empire, and the welfare of the agricultural interest he resigned Office before he had an opportunity of bringing in a Budget. The noble Lord has appeared to-night in a new character—as the determined opponent of the interest of the farmers and the ratepayers. He is very fond of telling the House that he has sacrificed himself upon the altar of economy. The sacrifice is greater than I supposed. I had believed his estrangement from the bulk of the Conservative Party was only temporary; but I now believe it to be permanent, because, after the hostile attitude he has taken up to-night towards the agricultural interest, I cannot imagine that he will ever again aspire to lead the great agricultural Party of England. I never should have thought that any Conservative, still less the late Leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, would grudge the necessary expenditure to maintain the efficiency of our Army and Navy, and sneer at the small sum—a mere drop in the ocean—which has been granted in aid of the distressed agricultural interest. I believe I, in common with the majority of both sides of the House, regard the efficiency of the Army and Navy as the first necessity of our national existence, just in the same way as we regard the revival of agriculture as the first necessity of our national prosperity. I believe that Parliament would long ago have taken measures for the arrest of the rapid decay of the agricultural interest if it had not been that the good intentions of the majority in favour of helping agriculture were always frustrated by a very small minority who refused to do anything for the assistance of the farmers for fear that the landowners might be helped at the same time. I really think that there is no cause for alarm on the part of these Gentlemen, because the great majority of landowners are pretty nearly ruined already, their property has been steadily deteriorating for the last 10 years, and what with mortgages and increased rates they have very little property left. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has shown himself friendly to the agricultural interest, and I believe the great majority of the English people are grateful to him for his Budget. The agricultural classes have undergone many years of depression, they have borne their condition with patience and resignation, and it is generally admitted have great claims for some recognition at the hands of Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. S. MASON (Lanark, Mid): Like the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for the Thirsk Division of York (Colonel Dawnay), who has just addressed the House, I represent a county constituency; but I cannot agree with him that the farming interest of my Division will be benefited by subventions from the Imperial Treasury. I listened most attentively, and with the deepest interest, to the very able speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) in introducing his Budget, and also to the speeches which he has since delivered; but I cannot say he has improved his position by his later speeches. My impression is that the first speech was more conclusive than those he has made in reply to the attacks made upon his Budget. Now, Sir, I expected to have heard from the right hon. Gentleman a humdrum Budget, a title he gave to it himself. I was disappointed in that respect, because, after his speech on Thursday last, I could not help coming to the conclusion that, instead of offering a humdrum Budget, he offered us a spendthrift Budget. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!"] Yes; I have no hesitation in characterizing it as a thoroughly spendthrift Budget. It is one step forward and two or three steps backwards. I admit there are some good features in it. The portion which has been described as the local Budget is, in my opinion, admirable, and I think this House will have no difficulty in giving its assent to that proposal. I think, however, that the right hon. Gentleman may very well take into consideration whether or not he should not give the country the option of a 2½ per cent Stock instead of a 3 per cent Stock. I believe that a 2½ per cent Stock commands a better price in the market than a 3 per cent Stock, and that it is to the interest of the Government and the country to borrow money, if we are going to borrow money at all, at the lowest rate of interest possible. I also admit the right hon. Gentleman has made a distinct improvement in regard to the tariff by remitting the excess Tobacco Duty. It was imposed by Sir Stafford Northcote in 1878, and it is not suited to the purpose for which it was designed. I do not think, however, that I can say much more as to the forward steps of the Budget. I am disposed to think that the other steps are very decidedly backward steps. I cannot endorse for a moment the proposal of transferring the Carriage Tax income to Local Bodies, if he is going to give Scotland £35,000, while he gives Ireland £50,000, and England £245,000. I do not believe £35,000 is quite Scotland's share; but, however, I do not make any complaint in the matter. The Scotch people pay at the present time 2*s.* per head of the population more in the shape of taxation than the English people do; but I do not complain of that either. I suppose is is in consequence of the Scottish people being richer in proportion than the English people. The reason why I condemn the transference of the Carriage Tax to Local Bodies is that by it we set up a vicious system with regard to contributions to Local Bodies from the Imperial Treasury. The system is thoroughly bad. The right hon. Gentleman tells us it is to be a temporary arrangement; but we all know what temporary arrangements of this kind come to. Once made, it is not easy to stop such an arrangement, and the door is opened for Local Bodies to come to the Imperial Treasury to help them in distress when they ought to look to their own energies for relief. Now, the leading feature of the Budget is, as has been very well expressed already, the illegitimate surplus which has been manufactured by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in tampering with the Sinking Fund. I admit that last year the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) tampered with the Sinking Fund to the extent of £800,000; but then there was a reason for it. I do not think there is any reason for it now. £800,000 of the Sinking Fund was taken last year in order that the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being might not be called upon to impose any fresh taxation on the country. There is no such necessity this year. By his own showing the right hon. Gentleman has a surplus of £1,000,000. I take the right hon. Gentleman's own figures. Very well; he could have taken 4*d.* off the Tobacco Duty, and have remitted the Carriage Tax, without in any way interfering with the Sinking Fund. Had the right hon. Gentleman stopped there the Budget, in my opinion, would not have been a humdrum Budget; it would have been a satisfactory Budget, and one which the Committee might have accepted with perfect freedom. Now, I do not know what motive induced the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer to lay violent hands upon £2,000,000 of the Sinking Fund, in order to take 1*d.* off the Income Tax unless it was to please his Friends behind him. He certainly has not given any satisfactory reason for doing so. The right hon. Gentleman told us that the Sinking Fund is not in a safe position, because it is too heavy; and he wished to put matters on a firmer basis to prevent the risk of greater inroads in the future. Now, it seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman, instead of doing what he wishes to do, is going to do precisely the reverse. By setting the bad example of tampering with the Fund set aside for the purpose of liquidating the National Debt, he is opening the door for greater inroads in the future. No proof has been given that the nation is not able to bear the annual payment of £28,000,000 in respect of the National Debt. The right hon. Gentleman took the Committee back to 1860. Now, I have a very lively recollection of 1860. It was a memorable year in the history of this country. It was a year in which I believe the greatest and most marvellous Budget of the century was produced. That Budget was produced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), who was at that time, I believe, Member for the University of Oxford. I happened to be in the Gallery that night, and I remember how the right hon. Gentleman electrified the House. It is now 27 years ago; but my recollection of that Budget is that it thrilled the country on account of the magnificent proposals it contained. If my memory serves me right, the right hon. Gentleman produced the Financial Statement in February, two months earlier than usual, because of the great proposals which were being made by Mr. Cobden in regard to the French Treaty. It so happened that the payment then being made towards the National Debt was £28,000,000; but by the falling in of long annuities — £2,146,000 — the contribution towards the National Debt in that year was reduced to £26,000,000. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer do with the £2,000,000 at that time? I quite admit that he did not seek to reduce the National Debt. The Income Tax had been advanced a year before from 5*d.* to 9*d.* in the pound; but the right hon. Gentleman did not propose to remit any part of it. Why did he not seek to reduce either the National Debt or the Income Tax? Because, as the Committee knows very well, we were at that time labouring under deferential or protective duties, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, fearlessly and boldly, made a clean sweep of all such duties, and established thoroughly and surely the great and sound principle of Free Trade. The right hon. Gentleman felt there was a great necessity for liberating the commerce of the country, and he did not hesitate to enter upon such a course. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer tell us on Thursday night was the effect of this great alteration in the tariff at that particular time? Why, that the Revenue immediately went up with leaps and bounds. He compared the period from 1860 to 1875 with the period since. In the five years immediately succeeding 1860, the produce of the taxes under the head of Customs, Excise, and Stamps increased by no less than 10·8 per cent, in the next five years 9·9 per cent, and in the five years ending 1875 no less than 24 per cent. Since then, the right hon. Gentleman told us, there has been hardly any increase at all. Now, Sir, does the right hon. Gentleman imagine he will restore to the country great prosperity by reducing the contribution to the National Debt from £28,000,000 to £26,000,000? Does he imagine he will bring about prosperous times by the paltry remission of 1*d*. of the Income Tax? I cannot understand why he should only take 1*d*. off the Tax. If the principle is good why not seize the whole of the Sinking Fund and take £7,000,000? He will then be able to reduce the Income Tax to 3*d*. in the pound, and thus please his Friends behind him, and those people in the country who admire this finance. He might have assigned as a reason that it is not a good thing for the country to pay debts in the Jubilee year. That would have been a reason which the right hon. Gentleman could never assign again, and which could hardly be assigned in the lifetime of any Member of the House. That would have been a reason, but to take £2,000,000 of the Sinking Fund in order to remit a 1*d*. of the Income Tax appears to have no reason in it at all. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I do not often trouble the House with a speech, and I only wish to let it be known what my views are with respect to this Budget. I have no doubt the great bulk of those hon. Gentlemen sitting behind the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who interrupt one, would have voted with the right hon. Gentleman if he had proposed to seize the entire Sinking Fund. Surely, Sir, if the country was able in 1860 to pay £28,000,000 towards the interest and liquidation of the National Debt, it must be able to do so now. Why, 1*d*. at that time yielded only £1,100,000; now it yields £2,000,000. The total annual value of the assessments under all the Schedules was only £335,000,000 in 1860. What is it now? It now exceeds £630,000,000; nearly double what it was in 1860. That fact alone might, in my opinion, have given the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer a little more courage, and a little more hope as to the future condition of the country. [*Interruption.*] I trust the Committee will exercise a little patience. [*Interruption.*] I do not intend to stop before I have finished what I am saying. We must look for relief in quite another direction—that is to say, in the direction of reducing the National Expenditure. The noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) seems to have caught the spirit of the age, and I regret that he is not now in his place, because I wish to thank him for the sound, sensible, and able speeches which he has made in the course of this discussion in favour of economy. Taking the three periods of the finance which the noble Lord some time ago indicated, 1868 to 1874-80 and 1881-5, the average Expenditure was for the first £72,000,000, for the second £79,500,000, and for the third £86,500,000. The last sum the noble Lord has characterized as infamous; but here we are going to spend £90,700,000, and if the noble Lord were here I dare say he would endorse my remark, that the chief causes of this expenditure are in connection with the Army and Navy. I do not see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Henry H. Fowler) in his place; but he stated the other night that we paid 30*s*. for every £1 worth obtained for the Army and Navy. Here, then, is the direction in which we must go to seek for relief of expenditure. I am a Member of the Public Accounts Committee, and I can endorse the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wolverhampton, who, I believe, has rather under than over-estimated this result. To ask that we should get value for our money is not asking that the efficiency of these Services shall be lessened; and when once we get that, then I say the door is open to you to reduce the Income Tax. You will not get rid of the Income Tax until greater economy and reduced expenditure takes place in regard to the Army and Navy than has been secured up to the present time. Economy is one thing, but I admit that policy must dominate expenditure in this country, and I am strongly of opinion that until the Government comes to the opinion which has been formed by the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, economy must not only be practised, but we must decide upon a policy of non-intervention with respect to European quarrels before we can get the Expenditure of the country into a proper condition. If the Government decides upon that policy I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will find himself in smooth water, so far as National Finance is concerned, and that we shall not require to be tampering with the Sinking Fund. I do not wish to detain the Committee further than is necessary to point out one or two matters in connection with the future finances of the country. I was somewhat disappointed that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not touch the Death Duties. I think the right hon. Gentleman sitting opposite to him tried to solve that question a few years ago, and I am sorry it did not find a place in the present Budget. I am sure it would be an act of justice to deal with those duties, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not be long in turning his attention to a remedy for the inequality which exists in connection with them. There is one other question to which I desire to refer, and upon which I have already put a Question to the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith). I asked him some time ago—I believe in the month of February—how the Government intended to tax profits made or earned upon goods imported by foreigners into this country. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not told us anything about his intentions in connection with this matter. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury said that it was impossible to answer my Question fully at the time, because it had reference to matters which were the subject of appeal to the High Court of Justice; but, speaking generally, he said that the tax would be charged by means of assessments on the agents. Now, I should like to know if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has decided as to how he will get at these agents? There are many firms in this country who have branch houses, and I believe they pay Income Tax; but there are also many houses in London and elsewhere which I believe entirely escape so far as profits on goods imported into this country are concerned. Therefore, I should be glad to know by what means the right hon. Gentleman intends to reach the profits on goods imported into this country by foreigners. Then, I should like to know what is going to be done with regard to the question of the rehabilitation of the coinage. I think it has been referred to as being under consideration, and I wish now simply to make a suggestion. This is a pressing matter, and the right hon. Gentleman has admitted it to be so—that 60 per cent of our gold coins are at present light. I think this is a disgraceful position for the country to stand in, and the sooner it is adequately dealt with by him the better it will be for our credit. I believe it will take £800,000 to meet the case of light coin; but I wish to suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should turn his attention to Scotland, when he would see the economical way in which the system of £1 notes is worked there, and learn how our coinage may be rehabilitated without taxation. I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman, now that I have directed his attention to the Scotch practice, will give this matter the consideration which it deserves. If you had £50,000,000 in £1 notes, it would only be half of what is now circulating in England in sovereigns, and the plan I propose would be of immense advantage, because there would be a saving of £1,500,000 in interest, besides the wear-and-tear of the coin. My belief is that there would be a saving by the adoption of this plan of £2,000,000. Finally, I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been carried away by the desire of making popularity out of the Budget. I must confess that I share the opinion of those who thought that the right hon. Gentleman would have been the last man in the country to have brought in a Budget of that character. We have been led to form a high opinion of the judgment of the right hon. Gentleman—that he would be the last man in the country to be influenced by the desire to introduce a popularity-seeking Budget, and I believe that he would not have evaded his own principles of finance except in order to please those hon. Members who now sit behind him. It is, however, a fact that great men make great mistakes, and I dare say that his mistake is one of that sort. I hope, however, that he will yet abandon the idea of tampering with the Sinking Fund, and if he does not do so I trust that the House of Commons will take steps to reject his proposal, and even if they do not, I am convinced that at the first opportunity the country will most emphatically condemn it.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) is aware, I rise simply to make an appeal to him on a question that touches me very nearly as an Irishman. I trust that the small modicum of £50,000 to be given to Ireland will not be made in such a form as to render it a mere drop in the ocean, but in a substantial way by which the people may benefit. England receives a good subvention in aid of main roads, and I thought we should get something for the same purpose. I very much regretted to hear that the £50,000 was to be thrown into the sink of arterial drainage. Arterial drainage is a very good thing, but it does not come home to Irish taxpayers with so much force as a grant in aid of the county cess would do. Arterial drainage in Ireland has always been considered the business of the landlord, and if the money is given to them the tenants will look upon it as a sop thrown to that class. I cannot help thinking that every farmer would be glad to find 1*d.* or 2*d.* struck off the county rate. There is no difficulty in finding the roads which are called main roads in Ireland in aid of which this money might be applied, and therefore I suggest that the same use should be made of the money which is proposed to be given to Ireland as of that which is to be expended in the United Kingdom.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN) (St. George's, Hanover Square): I am divided between my anxiety to answer all the various questions and appeals made to me, and at the same time not to abuse that large indulgence which has been accorded to me by hon. Members on both sides of the House, looking at the great length at which it was my duty to address them. I hope the Committee—if I refrain from answering on any point put to me—will not attribute it to any want of courtesy on my part. In the first place, I may say that I will not forget the point addressed to me by the hon. and gallant Member for North Down (Colonel Waring), who has just sat down. It was originally in my mind to make a contribution towards the county cess in Ireland. I will not, however, dwell upon that point any further. The subvention in aid of highways in Great Britain, as I have emphatically pointed out, is a temporary arrangement, pending those further more substantial arrangements which may be contemplated. But in Ireland there are no contributions to the Carriage Tax, and were we to apply the principle applied in England we should be introducing positively a new principle so far as Ireland is concerned. And when I look at the enormous sum spent on roads in Ireland, I am afraid that £50,000 would, indeed, be looked upon as a drop in the ocean. At the same time, I should be happy to communicate with any hon. Members from Ireland, if they have in view a form in which the money could be better applied than that which I have roposed. With regard to the observations of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lanark (Mr. Mason), I repeat that the light-gold question is one which stands among the first subjects to be considered. I trust it may be possible to reach this in the course of the present Session, if we can make progress, by the assistance of hon. Members opposite, with the most important measures before Parliament. It is our fate with regard to more measures than one that we cannot make progress when it is our earnest desire to have those measures placed before the House. The hon. Member for Mid Lanark has alluded to the instruction and guidance which I might derive from the Scotch system of banking. My connection with Scotland was unfortunately cut rather short; but I am sufficiently acquainted with the subject to know the great value attached by the people to their banking system, and to be aware of its excellences as well as of some of its defects. I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for assisting me with his views with regard to the coinage question, and as soon as that question can be dealt with in respect of England it shall also be dealt with in respect of Scotland and Ireland. I repeat that the Death Duties are a matter of urgent public importance, and they will certainly obtain the attention of the Government, who hope to be able to deal with the subject at an early period. It hope it will not be discourteous to many hon. Members who have addressed the Committee on many of the details of the present financial proposals, if I say that the most important contribution to the discussion since the speeches of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) has been that of another ex-Chanceller of the Exchequer—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers). It has been my fate to deal with four ex-Chancellors of the Exchequer in this debate, and a formidable array it has been to meet. My right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh specially challenged me on the point that the contribution per head of the population towards the reduction of the National Debt and interest is smaller now than it used to be. I do not see that in dealing with this subject it matters much to what extent the population has increased, if that increased population is not called upon to contribute to the payment of Debt. It is no use pointing to the aggregate population, if 9-10ths of that population are free from the obligation to contribute.

Mr. CHILDERS: That does not meet my statement at all. The great mass of the present population contributes by indirect taxation.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Exactly; but this vastly increased population which ought to contribute towards some heroic system of paying off Debt actually pays at the present moment less indirect taxation than it did 10 years ago.

Mr. CHILDERS: I made a comparison with 1876.

Mr. GOSCHEN: But there is a much more convenient time to compare with the present.

Mr. CHILDERS: I gave a series of computations extending over 27 years, and I showed that the amount devoted to the National Debt had steadily fallen off, first, in its total amount; secondly, in proportion to the total taxes; and, thirdly, per head of the population.

Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; but I have now to deal with the continuation of the proposals made 10 or 12 years ago. I contrast the position now with what it was then; and I find, looking back to the time to which the right hon. Gentleman points, that owing to the changes in taxation which have taken place the whole brunt of paying off the National Debt has been borne by a single class of taxpayers. I repeat that it is of no use pointing to the number of the population, if the burden on one particular class is for this purpose greater than it used to be. Several hon. Members have commented on the position I have thought it right to take up with regard to this matter—namely, that it is not only necessary to consider it from the general point of view, but from the point of view of what is just and fair to those who pay this tax. I refer my right hon. Friend to what happened two or three years ago, when it was necessary to put an extra tax on the Income Tax payers for certain purposes. It is part of my case that this was put on for a special purpose, and, that special object no longer existing, I think it right that a portion of that addition ought to be taken off. At the time I refer to the Income Tax was raised from 6*d.* to 8*d.* in the pound; it was raised without any increase of Debt. The only proposal of the defenders of official orthodoxy was to increase the duty on spirits, and they only ventured to do that under the shield of the United Kingdom Alliance. I trust I have answered the point of my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh. With regard to what has been said about the reduction which is contemplated in the Income Tax, hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have spoken as if the payers of Income Tax were the particular clients of hon. Members sitting on this side of the House. That, however, is not at all the case. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, who deprecated the introduction of Party politics into a matter of this kind, and I assert that, looking to the character of the Income Tax payers at large, we have not been taking specially into account a class of people who may be supposed to support the Conservative Party, and probably the constituencies of hon. Members on both sides of the House are interested in this proposal in equal numbers. Therefore, I say it is not for hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to argue, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt) did, that the concession to the payers of Income Tax has been made upon political grounds. But there is one other point in connection with the payers of Income Tax to which I will very briefly refer. I have been asked by the hon. Baronet the Member for the University of London (Sir John Lubbock) a question as to the accuracy of the figures I quoted relative to the number of persons contributing to the Income Tax. I should state that those figures are not to be looked upon as absolutely correct, because they are largely modified by the fact that in many cases several persons may appear under different Schedules; but, speaking in a broad and general manner, no doubt there are enormous numbers of persons who pay Income Tax, and who have very limited means—means, at least, which would not at all entitle them to be ranked among the wealthy classes. It was to that large number that I called attention in the statistics I quoted, and with no desire whatever to exaggerate their number. With regard to the tobacco question, my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh seemed to think there had been the same increase in the Revenue on tobacco as on tea.

Mr. CHILDERS: I said that the increase in the annual receipt of the tea duty had fallen off since 1878, more than the increase in the annual receipt of the Tobacco Duty, taking 1878 as the same starting point, and going back to 1870, and onward to 1886.

Mr. GOSCHEN: From 1880 to 1885 the Tobacco Revenue increased by £712,000 only, an increase of 8½ per cent, while in regard to tea the difference between the Duty in 1885 and 1880 amounted to £1,097,000, an increase of 29½ per cent, or, in other words, the figures show that while the consumption per head of tea has increased 10 per cent, and that of tobacco 3 per cent, the Revenue from tea has increased 29½ per cent, and the Revenue from tobacco 8½ per cent. The year 1885 was rather an exceptional year; but still I maintain that in the case of tobacco the increase is not so favourable as regards the relative proportion as is the increase upon tea. I may here say, with regard generally to the suggestions that have been offered as to the Tobacco Duty, I have to assure the House that I will do my best to consider them, especially with reference to the dates that have been fixed. I do not know whether, at this advanced hour of the evening, there are any other questions on which hon. Members desire that I should enter. There was one suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh, that besides the extra tax on Debenture Stock, of which I am glad to find he approves, there are other securities that might be similarly dealt with. I may state that my attention has been directed to that subject, and the right hon. Gentleman is probably aware that foreign bonds and securities were dealt with recently, and a duty of 10*s.* placed upon their issue. That appears to be a very moderate duty, and the question might be raised whether it should be increased. As to the question of Stamps, I may inform the Committee that I shall avail myself with pleasure of suggestions that have been made from all parts of the House as to whether some further improvement cannot be made either this year or next. I do not think there are any other matters I need refer to.

Mr. CHILDERS: There is the question of marine insurance.

Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman reminds me of the question of marine insurance, as to which it has been suggested whether, considering the smallness of the whole amount to be raised, it would not be wise to abolish that duty altogether. In regard to this, I would say that I feel very strongly and deeply that, considering the fact that the whole of our taxation rests on so narrow a basis and so small a number of taxes, I am not prepared to abandon any single tax without the gravest reflection and the most anxious study. I am well aware that such a sum as £130,000 is one for which it is scarcely worth while to keep up a tax; but until I have been able to see more deeply into the whole of our fiscal system, I shall hold on to every tax we now have, making such remissions from time to time as may be calculated to render them more endurable to those who have to pay them. Let us endeavour to aim at simplicity, while at the same time removing inequalities, injustice, and those little annoyances which often aggravate the taxpayer far more than the amount he has to pay; but do not let us abandon any single source of Revenue in the present state of our finances. I have again to thank the Committee for the manner in which, upon the whole, they have received the Budget it has been my duty to propose. I have felt the soundness of some of the suggestions that have been made and the changes that have been recommended, and I can assure the Committee, of whom I hope at least the majority will believe me, that I have made the proposals I have brought forward in conjunction with my Colleagues in the firm conviction that we are doing our best for the credit of our finances, and not, as has been suggested, for the sake of any popularity-hunting motive.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I must apologize to the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) for an interruption of mine, which, however, was only intended to mark my appreciation of his Budget. In offering such comments as I now have to make, I should like, in the first instance, to contrast the debate in which we are now engaged with the Clôture and Coercion Debates of the past few months. The whole of this discussion has been eminently business-like in character; the Committee has derived a great deal of instruction from what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer; everything has gone on in the most amicable manner, and the country will read the debate with great interest and with much enlightenment. If, however, we turn to the other picture, what is it that has been witnessed during the last few months, and is likely to be renewed tomorrow night in the ordinary course of procedure as settled by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), and how much better would it be if it could be arranged that you, Sir, should report Progress now, and go into that Chair again tomorrow, so that we might proceed with the Business for which we are really sent here—namely, the discussion and determination of the financial affairs of the nation. Having made my apology for having interrupted the right hon. Gentleman—an interruption not meant to interfere with his speech, but merely as an expression of my admiration for the way in which he was putting his views before the Committee—I will now offer a few remarks upon the Budget the right hon. Gentleman has introduced. I do not propose to go into the question of the Sinking Fund—as to whether it is wise to abolish it or not; because, after we have had so strong an array of ex-Chancellors of the Exchequer speaking on that subject, my contribution to its elucidation would necessarily be a very humble one. Still, I should like to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that his proposal to grant a sum of £50,000 in aid of arterial drainage in Ireland amounts only to what would be a mere drop in the ocean. I admit that there would be nothing more popular on the part of the class of small tenants in Ireland than the development of a really large and useful system of arterial drainage; but it would be impossible to do any good in regard to this matter in Ireland under at least £15,000,000, so that a small sum like £50,000 would count as almost nothing. The drainage of some of the rivers would, it is stated, involve an enormous expense. It has been proposed to expend £500,000 on the drainage of the Shannon; but the fact is that the Shannon could be drained for about £200,000. It would be a very easy thing to spend a large sum of money on such arterial drainage as is really needed, whereas, by draining the rivers, money would, to a great extent, be thrown away, and very little good be done to the navigation. If a sum amounting to £50,000 is to be given to Ireland, I would suggest that it would be much better to give it for some other purpose. I think it would be a good thing to give it in relief of the farmers from the county cess, which, hon. Members may be aware, is the same as the county rate in England, particularly as the rates are largely paid by the very smallest class of occupiers; but I object to the way in which the county cess is administered in Ireland, and especially to the way in which those who administer it are selected. They do not always manage very badly; but the way in which they are selected is disgraceful. I think the best form in which this money could be given would be in relief of the poor rates. I do not mean that it should be given directly to the relief of the poor, because it would not do to have an Imperial grant available for such a purpose; and no one but the local bodies can keep down the taxation levied for the relief of the poor. But, under the system which prevails in Ireland, the poor rates are largely spent, not in the relief of the poor, but on a whole series of burdens, amongst which I may mention the making out of lists of voters in the electoral districts, vaccination expenses, the keeping down of diseases among cattle; and some five or six other matters which have nothing whatever to do with the relief of the poor. Now, I should like to see the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of Exchequer take off those burdens, which ought not properly to be charged upon the poor rates, which ought to be matters of Imperial taxation, and which the Poor Law Guardians have no power to keep down. That, I think, would be about the best mode of allocating the proposed grant of £50,000. I would also refer, for a moment, to another subject—I allude to the Tobacco Duty. I was struck with the remark of the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill), that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he had chosen to amend his Budget and kept up the Sinking Fund, had one of two courses open to him. One was to take off 1*d.* from the Income Tax, and not give anything in the shape of local contributions, avoiding the remission of the Tobacco Duty; and the other was not to reduce the Income Tax and to take off the Tobacco Duty. If the right hon. Gentleman does amend his Budget, I should say keep the 1*d.* on the Income Tax, but take off a further portion of the Tobacco Duty. I consider that the remission of the Tobacco Duty is the best part of the Budget; but, by the proposal made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the consumer will gain nothing for a year or two. When the Tobacco Duty was increased by the late Sir Stafford Northcote, I was one of the strongest opponents of that proposal, and I pointed out how I thought it would increase the cost to the consumers. I was, however, so far wrong that, in point of fact, it did not increase the cost in point of the price paid; but it had the effect of inducing so heavy a watering of the tobacco, that for what he did get the consumer was paying almost double. Does the right hon. Gentleman think that by giving the remission of Duty he now proposes the result will be that the tobacco will be less watered than at present? For my part, I do not think it will, and in my opinion it will not be found that even in two or three years time the full benefit will be obtainable by the consumer, although perhaps he may get it eventually. What is proposed now is to take off 4*d.* in the pound. Now, I wish to point out that this 4*d.* is only divisible into ounces by farthings, there being 16 farthings in that amount; but in ordinary towns throughout the country farthings are not habitually used, and the consequence will be that the farthing per ounce will go into the pockets of the retailers. Now, if the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken off 8*d.* per pound from the Tobacco Duty, the result would have been that the decreased price would have been ½*d.* per ounce and the consumer would have got the full benefit. I wonder how it is that point did not strike the mind of the right hon. Gentleman. As it is the retailers will get the advantage, and though they are doubtless very estimable people I should very much have preferred that the consumer should have had the benefit of the reduction. These are what have struck me as the blots noticeable in the Budget, and I only wish to add a few words with regard to my opinions upon taxation generally, although they may not be very popular in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Joseph Chamberlain), who is now making a tour of Scotland, and other hon. Gentlemen have pointed out that the poorer classes pay higher taxes in proportion to their incomes than the wealthier class; because so large a sum is raised on tobacco and other articles they consume, and that therefore any revision of taxation should be applied to indirect taxation and not to the Income Tax. Now, I hold it to be very foolish to tax heavily such articles as tea and tobacco which we cannot grow here, and I think it would be wiser to put this taxation on meat and butter, and such articles as we are able to produce. If you were to take off the whole of the duty on tea and half the duty on tobacco and put it on home produce such as I have spoken of the consumer, instead of paying on the former articles, would have to pay on the latter, and although the consumers would not in the aggregate be better off great benefit would thereby accrue to the labourers and the farmers.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I will promise that in what I wish to say I will not detain the Committee more than four or five minutes; and in the first place I will say that I think the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) would have done a much more popular thing if he had devoted the sum he proposes to give by the remission of a portion of the Tobacco Duty to the extension of the system of Imperial Penny Postage. My principal object in rising is to correct the impression which is now gaining currency, and which was favoured by the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), who pointed out that a very large expenditure was projected in relation to the Post Office. I wish the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had cleared up this matter. No lesser sum than £700,000 is placed on the Estimates for the packet service, and that service pays extremely well, excepting one instance. The sum of £100,000 is charged for the American Packet Service, and the amount received for postages in letters, newspapers, and other articles from that source is no less than £200,000. We could, without doubt, reduce the postage to America without the slightest loss to the Revenue. If the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer were desirous of performing a popular act he could do nothing better than introduce an Imperial Penny Postage to all parts of the Empire. The exception to the profitable Postal Service to which I have referred is in the case of India, and is one that will surprise most people. In the scheme, the carrying out of which I have so much at heart, the greatest blot is what is taking place in connection with the Indian postage, which is nothing less than a scandal. No less a sum than £300,000 is expended every year in the conveyance of letters to and from India, and the entire Revenue obtained from that source is only £55,000. Late as the hour is, I am sure the Committee will forgive me for placing this fact before them. The next point to which I desire to call attention is this; that it is not desired that we should extract money from the Treasury in order to carry our views into effect, but merely that there should be a readjustment of the expenditure on the Post Office whereby economies could be effected that would suffice for the object in contemplation. I now desire to call the attention of the Committee to one portion of my letter to the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), on the subject of Imperial Penny Postage—a letter which was not published by the Post Office, but was refused publication by the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General. I there point out one of the gravest scandals of the present system; and how the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has omitted all reference to this subject, while devoting much attention to other matters, I cannot possibly imagine. In that letter I say—

> "Unfortunately for England, under the Postal Union System, each country keeps its own postage. Last week your letter-carriers were engaged in the laborious task of distributing a million of samples of English merchandise and circulars, for which the British Post Office was not paid a farthing. The British merchants and manufacturers sent these samples in bulk to Belgium to be posted back to England at 1*d.* each. If they had posted them in England, the cost would have been 2*d.* each from London to any part of the United Kingdom. The consequence was that, as each country keeps it own postage, Belgium alone benefited by the transaction, and England did all the heavy work free—that of delivery! I am informed that the whole of the merchants in one street n London have their letters sent in bulk to France every Friday morning, to be posted there for India, China, and the East generally, thereby saving 100 per cent—the difference between 2½*d.* and 5*d.* Here, then, by regulating and assimilating your charges, you have a new source of income; and if England, as the Mother, takes the lead in these great reforms, her children will unquestionably follow her."

How the House of Commons can tolerate such a state of things for an instant is, in the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General's own words, "a grave scandal." I trust that, before this debate closes, we shall obtain from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer some statement in a direction that will be satisfactory to the country. The next point I have to mention will not occupy more than a moment. I wish to state that I regard the whole Postal and Telegraph Service of the Empire as, in reality, what may be termed the nervous system of the Empire. If you in any way interfere with its free action, you paralyze the whole body. It is monstrous that it is impossible for us to communicate with our friends in Australia by telegraph at a less cost than 10*s.* a word, and that we cannot send them a letter for less than 6*d.*; while, on the other hand, there are 100,000 people in Australia who, last year, sent to their friends in this country no less than £346,000 in money orders, or nearly £1,000 a-day, for sums varying from £2 to £5. The Committee will understand the large amount of benefit that was thus conferred upon this country. I will not further trespass on the time of the Committee, but will conclude by expressing a hope that we shall either have a promise of some remedy for this state of things; or that the Government will agree to the appointment of a Select Committee—a proposal in which I feel assured the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in the late Government (Mr. Henry H. Fowler), the late Postmaster General (Lord Wolverton), and other hon. Members of the Opposition will heartily concur. I think that no time should be lost in redressing this Post Office scandal—this great evil of the Packet Service—and in extending, facilitating, and cheapening the cost of our Postal Service to every part of the Empire.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

(Income Tax.)

1. *Resolved,* "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—

For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Seven Pence;

And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—

In England, the Duty of Three Pence Halfpenny;

In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Two Pence Halfpenny;

Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds."

(Stamp Duty on Transfer of Debenture Stock.)

2. *Resolved,* That, in lieu of the Duties now payable on a transfer of any Debenture Stock or Funded Debt of any Company or Corporation, or any County Stock, whether on sale or otherwise, there shall be charged the Duties hereinafter mentioned or referred to (that is to say):—

Where the transfer is on sale, the same *ad valorem* Duties as are charged by "The Stamp Act, 1870," upon a conveyance or transfer on sale of other property by relation to the amount or value of the consideration for the sale;

	£	s.	d.
Where the transfer is of any other kind than on sale or mortgage	0	10	0

And, in lieu of the Duties now payable under section forty-six of "The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1881," upon every "Stock Certificate to Bearer," there shall be charged upon every such Certificate a Stamp Duty of an amount equal to three times the amount of the *ad valorem* Stamp Duty which would be chargeable on a Deed transferring the Stock specified in the Certificate if the consideration for the transfer were the nominal value of such Stock.

(Composition for Stamp Duties.)

3. *Resolved,* That, by way of composition for certain Stamp Duties, there shall be charged upon the aggregate amount appearing on every half-yearly account delivered to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue as hereinafter mentioned, for every full sum of One hundred pounds, and every fractional part of One hundred pounds of such amount, the Duty of Six Pence:

Any Company or Corporation may enter into an agreement with the said Commissioners for the delivery of an account showing the nominal amount of all shares, stock, and funded debt, or of any of them, as the case may be, or the amount thereof in respect of which payment has been made, if the whole sums payable in respect thereof have not been paid, and, after such agreement has been entered into, the account shall be delivered half-yearly in each year:

The Justices of any county, liberty, riding, part, or division of a county may enter into an agreement with the said Commissioners for the delivery of an account showing the nominal amount of all the "County Stock," or the amount thereof in respect of which payment has been made, if the whole sums payable in respect of such stock have not been paid, and after such agreement has been entered into the account shall be delivered half-yearly in each year:

Where an account is to be delivered the same shall be delivered to the said Commissioners on or within seven days before the first day of February and the first day of August in each year, and the Duty shall be paid upon the delivery of the account:

So soon as any account has been delivered, and payment of the Duty thereon has been made, Transfers of any Shares, Stock, or Funded Debt or County Stock included in such account, together with Share Warrants or Stock Certificates relating thereto, shall be exempt from Stamp Duty.

(Stamp Duty on Sea Insurances.)

4. *Resolved*, That where the premium or consideration for any Sea Insurance does not exceed the rate of Two Shillings and Six Pence per centum of the sum insured by the Policy, the Stamp Duty upon such Policy shall be One Penny only.

(Tobacco Duties.)

5. *Resolved*, That, in lieu of the Duties of Customs now payable on Tobacco, there shall, on and after the 21st day of May 1887, be charged, upon Tobacco imported into Great Britain or Ireland, the Duties following (that is to say) :—

		£	*s.*	*d.*
Tobacco manufactured, viz. :				
Segars	the lb.	0	5	0
Cavendish or Negro-head	the lb.	0	4	6
Cavendish or Negro-head manufactured in Bond	the lb.	0	4	0
Other manufactured Tobacco . . .	the lb.	0	4	0
Snuff, containing more than 13 lbs. of moisture in every 100 lb. weight thereof . .	the lb.	0	3	9
Snuff, not containing more than 13 lbs. of moisture in every 100 lb. weight thereof	the lb.	0	4	6
Tobacco unmanufactured, viz. :				
Containing 10 lbs. or more of moisture in every 100 lb. weight thereof . . .	the lb.	0	3	2
Containing less than 10 lbs. of moisture in every 100 lb. weight thereof . . .	the lb.	0	3	6

In lieu of the drawback now allowable on Tobacco, there shall, on and after the 31st day of May 1887, be allowed the drawback of 3*s.* 3*d.* named in section 1 of "The Manufactured Tobacco Act, 1863."

(Customs and Inland Revenue.)

6. *Resolved*, That it is expedient to amend the Law relating to the Inland Revenue and the Customs.

COMPARISON OF REVENUE (Exchequer Receipts) AND EXPENDITURE (Exchequer Issues), 1886-7.

Revenue (Exchequer Receipts).	£
Customs	20,155,000
Excise	25,250,000
Stamps	11,830,000
Land Tax	1,070,000
House Duty	1,910,000
Property and Income Tax	15,900,000
Produce of Taxes	*£76,115,000*
Post Office	8,450,000
Telegraph Service	1,830,000
Crown Lands	370,000
Interest on Advances for Local Works, and on Purchase Money of Suez Canal Shares	1,176,192
Miscellaneous (including Fee, &c., Stamps) ..	2,831,566
Produce of Non-Tax Revenue	*£14,657,758*
Total Revenue (Exchequer Receipts) ..	£90,772,758

Expenditure (Exchequer Issues).	£
Fixed Charge of Debt ..	27,366,367
Debt created for Local Loan Purposes, Interest, &c. ..	391,712
Exchequer Bonds (Suez), Interest, &c.	199,944
Other Consolidated Fund Charges	1,743,891
Total Consolidated Fund Charges ..	*£29,701,914*
Army	18,429,272
Navy	13,265,401
Civil Services (Miscellaneous)	17,826,454
Customs and Inland Revenue	2,676,918
Post Office	5,436,893
Telegraph Service	1,935,000
Packet Service	724,900
Total Supply Services	*£60,294,838*
Total Expenditure (Exchequer Issues)	89,996,752
Surplus of Revenue ..	776,006
	£90,772,758

ESTIMATED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1887-8.

(BEFORE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.)

Revenue (Exchequer Receipts).	£	Expenditure (Exchequer Issues).	£
1. Customs	20,200,000	1. Fixed Charge of Debt	28,036,917
2. Excise	25,292,000	2. Loans for Local Purposes, Interest and Sinking Fund	641,000
3. Stamps	11,658,000	3. Suez Canal Exchequer Bonds, Interest and Sinking Fund	200,000
4. Land Tax	1,065,000	4. Other Charges on Consolidated Fund	1,714,000
5. House Duty	1,920,000		
6. Income Tax (8*d.* in £)	15,900,000		
Produce of Taxes	*£76,035,000*	*Total Charges on Consolidated Fund*	*£30,591,917*
7. Post Office	8,600,000	5. Army	18,393,900
8. Telegraph Service	1,950,000	6. Navy	12,476,800
9. Crown Lands	370,000	7. Civil Services (Miscellaneous)	17,931,508
10. Interest on Advances	1,200,000	8. Customs and Inland Revenue	2,715,727
11. Miscellaneous	3,000,000	9. Post Office	5,420,770
		10. Telegraph Service	1,950,248
		11. Packet Service	699,341
Produce of Non-Tax Revenue	*£15,120,000*	*Total Supply Services*	*£59,588,294*
		Total Expenditure	90,180,211
		Surplus	974,789
Total Revenue	£91,155,000		£91,155,000

ESTIMATED REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1887-8.

(After Taking into Account the Changes Proposed by
The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)

Estimated Revenue.

	£	£
1. Customs ..	20,200,000	
Deduct on account of Tobacco Duty ..	600,000	19,600,000
2. Excise ..		25,292,000
3. Stamps ..	11,658,000	
Addition ..	100,000	11,758,000
4. Land Tax..		1,065,000
5. House Duty		1,920,000
6. Income Tax	15,900,000	
Reduction of Tax ..	1,560,000	14,340,000
Produce of Taxes		*£73,975,000*
7. Post Office		8,600,000
8. Telegraph Service ..		1,950,000
9. Crown Lands		370,000
10. Interest on Advances ..	1,200,000	
Loss of Interest on Local Loans	960,000	240,000
11. Miscellaneous ..		3,000,000
Produce of Non-Tax Revenue..		*£14,160,000*
Total Revenue		£88,135,000

Estimated Expenditure.

	£	£
1. Charge for Debt—		
(1.) Fixed Charge ..	28,037,000	
Reduction ..	2,037,000	26,000,000
(2.) Other Charges ..	841,000	
Reduction ..	627,000	214,000
2. Other Charges on Consolidated Fund ..		1,714,000
Total Charges on Consolidated Fund ..		*£27,928,000*
3. Army ..		18,394,000
4. Navy ..		12,477,000
5. Civil Services	17,931,000	
Additional Grants in aid ..	330,000	18,261,000
6. Customs and Inland Revenue ..		2,716,000
7. Post Office ..		5,421,000
8. Telegraph Service ..		1,950,000
9. Packet Service ..		699,000
Total Supply Services ..		*£59,918,000*
Total Expenditure ..		87,846,000
Surplus ..		289,000
		£88,135,000

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report the said Resolutions to the House."

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Mr. Courtney, on this question I desire to put a question to the Government. Some four or five years ago it was the custom to print in the Civil Service Estimates the names of all the pensioners who had been in the Civil Service. The Treasury then made an arrangement that that custom should be discontinued; but that in place of it a List of the pensioners should be presented to the House periodically. When I held the post of Secretary to the Treasury, a Motion was made for such a Return; and I stated on that Motion that the close of the year 1886 was the time agreed upon for the presentation of the List. We have now nearly reached May, 1887, and I will, therefore, ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) whether he will lay on the Table a List of the Civil Service Pensions, stating, in the usual form, the age of the pensioners, for what the pension was granted, the length of the service performed, and so on?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON) (Leeds, N.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to answer his Question. The right hon. Gentleman has correctly said that this Return was, in former years, given in full; but I suppose for reasons of economy, which evidently actuated the right hon. Gentleman when in Office, its presentation has been discontinued for some time. If the Committee should be of opinion that it is desirable to go to a very large expense for this purpose, the Return can be presented. I have made inquiry about it, and if the expense is of no consequence, there will be no difficulty in giving the Return. The right hon. Gentleman knows that it would cost a good deal of money to publish it in the form he suggests; and perhaps it might be sufficient to show the additions to, or the reductions in, the List. But I do not think, however, that there will be very much difficulty about it, and if the right hon. Gentleman presses for the full List, we will give it.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: I shall certainly press for it, and for two reasons. In the first place, because I deem it absolutely necessary that the Treasury should keep faith with this House. The publication of the yearly List was discontinued, on the distinct understanding that the Treasury would lay this information periodically before the House. In the second place, it is absolutely impossible for hon. Members to go through the Lists for a dozen years or so, in order to see who is living, and who is dead. There is no difficulty about it. It is all in print. I really wish to press for it.

MR. JACKSON: I do not want the right hon. Gentleman to remain under any misunderstanding. As far as I know, there is nothing at the Treasury to inform me that any pledge was given to the House, or that there was any understanding such as the right hon. Gentleman suggests. But, of course, I accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement in that respect.

Question put, and *agreed to.*

Resolutions to be reported *To-morrow.*

Committee to sit again upon *Wednesday.*

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) will tell us, assuming that the usual Bill will be read to-morrow, when the second reading will be taken?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH): I believe, Mr. Speaker, that 10 days must elapse before the second reading can be taken. Of course, everything depends upon the progress of Business in the House, and I cannot make any announcement until I see what progress is made.

SUPPLY — ARMY AND NAVY ESTIMATES.

MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE.

[ADJOURNED DEBATE.]

Order of the Day for Adjourned Debate on Motion for Appointment of Select Committee [5th April].

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH) Strand, Westminster): I wish to say a word respecting this Order. The Government were appealed to last Session to grant an inquiry into the expenditure upon the Army and Navy, and they readily consented to do so. From a very early date in the Session a Motion has been on the Paper for the appointment of a Select Committee, and it has all along been opposed. It is not, of course, possible for the Government to bring on a Motion of the kind at a time when it could be discussed. If, therefore, it is not the wish of the House that the Committee should be appointed, the Government must bow to the decision of the House; although we are most anxious that the Committee should investigate the expenditure on the Army and Navy. We must leave the matter in the hands of the House. The Motion will remain on the Paper; but, unless the block is withdrawn, it will be impossible to bring it forward.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): If I may do so, I will strongly endorse what the right hon. Gentleman has said. Both sides of the House agreed, some time ago, that this inquiry should be made. There was a universal understanding, two or three Sessions ago, that this Committee should be appointed, and I do trust that hon. Gentlemen will withdraw their objections to the Motion coming on at any time of the night, and so allow this important inquiry to take place.

Adjourned Debate *further adjourned* till *Thursday.*

MOTIONS.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) COMMISSION (INVERNESS SCHEME).

MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire), in rising to move the following Resolution:—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold her consent to the scheme of the Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission, now lying upon the Table of the House, for the management of the endowments in the burgh and county of Inverness, known as the Royal Academy, the Mackintosh Farr Fund, the Bell Fund, the Duncan Bequest in so far as applicable to educational purposes, the Ettles Bequest, the Denoon, Colin Davidson and Logan Bequests, the Laird of Mackintosh Bequest, and the Hector Fraser Bequest; but in so far only as concerns the Mackintosh Farr Fund,"

said: The scheme of the Education Commissioners, to which I object, is of a very arbitrary kind. At this late hour it would be wrong of me to detain the House at very great length; but I have no alternative but to bring forward my Motion. This fund was left at the beginning of this century by Captain William Mackintosh for the purpose of educating primarily the sons of four families named Mackintosh, viz.: those of Farr, Holme, Kyllochie, and Dalmigavie. I hold in my hand a Memorial from the representatives of these four families objecting to the scheme. The endowment was secondly destined to the collaterals of these four families, but always named Mackintosh families; and I have here a document signed by no than less 200 heads of these collateral families, and also a Memorial from 400 ratepayers of the town of Inverness, also objecting to the scheme. Captain Mackintosh left £10,000, to be devoted to the purpose of education in this manner. The fund fell into Chancery, and the consequence was that more than a generation passed by before the scheme came into effect. The matter was subsequently, by the Magistrates of Inverness, the Trustees of the Fund, taken before the Court of Session in Edinburgh to obtain a decision as to the boys really entitled to the benefits of the Fund, and a scheme was drawn up, under which a great deal of good was done in the education of Mackintosh boys. Some doubts, however, arose as to the administration, and in the year 1862—only 25 years ago—an Act of Parliament was passed for the better administration of the Trust. Under that Act the constitution of the Fund was much enlarged, and two gentlemen—the Sheriff and Convener of Inverness-shire were added to the Trust. I need not say that the scheme has been of immense benefit to the boys who have been educated under it, and who generally spring from the humbler class of society. Well, the scheme was working very well. But a few years ago, when the Education Endowments Act was passed, several persons at Inverness took it into their heads that it would be a very proper thing to start a new scheme altogether; and they resolved, in their wisdom, that the whole Fund ought to be devoted to secondary education. When the Education Commissioners came to Inverness the great bulk of the Mackintoshes interested, who are spread all over the Highlands, and without organization, conconsidered that they would be safe in the hands of the Trustees. They had entire confidence in the Trustees. I may say, for my own part, that, having been consulted as Member for the Inverness Burghs at that time, I was willing in case worse might happen, that a certain sum should be devoted to secondary education; but I expressed that opinion entirely on my own responsibility, not being aware of the strong feeling on the part of those Mackintoshes interested on the subject. The Commissioners refused the scheme of the Trustees, and fixed upon a scheme which took off no less than one-third of the amount of the Fund for the purpose of secondary education. Those for whom I appear say that if there were no boys, or an inadequate number qualified to benefit by the scheme, then, undoubtedly, if there was any surplus, it would be right that it should be devoted to the purpose of secondary education; but such is not the case. On the contrary, it is within my own personal knowledge that, last year, there were more claimants for the Fund than there was sufficient money to dispose of. I need not dwell upon the advantages conferred on the boys by the Fund; but I may state that, at the last examination of the Inverness Royal Academy, the *dux* of the school, a Mackintosh bursar, educated under the existing system, carried off no less than three medals. It so happens that the funds are a good deal larger than the testator originally bequeathed; but the Commissioners have given no reason whatever why they should appropriate this one-third for the purpose of secondary education. They merely declare, in their Scheme, that it shall be so. The moment the decision of the Commissioners was made known to the families interested, they protested against it; and I now appeal to this House, in their name, to say that as no reason whatever has been given for this scheme, it ought not to be confirmed. I beg to move the Motion that stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the scheme of the Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission, now lying upon the Table of the House, for the management of the endowments in the burgh and county of Inverness, known as the Royal Academy, the Mackintosh Farr Fund, the Bell Fund, the Duncan Bequest in so far as applicable to educational purposes, the Ettles Bequest, the Denoon, Colin Davidson, and Logan Bequests, the Laird of Mackintosh Bequest, and the Hector Fraser Bequest; but in so far only as concerns the Mackintosh Farr Fund."—(*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh.*)

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I rise, Sir, to say a few words with reference to the Motion made by my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness-shire. I hope the House will not adopt that Motion, and I will very shortly indeed state my reasons. I believe that this scheme is one which, without doing any violence to the intentions of the founder, is likely to promote not only the interests of education at Inverness, but also the interests of those who benefit by the Fund. It is for this reason, and for no other, that I hope the House will not adopt the Motion of my hon. Friend. As stated by my hon. Friend, the nature of the scheme is this—the Commissioners propose that one-third of the income derived from the Fund shall be applied towards the maintenance of the Inverness Academy. I desire, very briefly, to state to the House what has been the history of the Scheme. In September, 1884, the Commissioners held an inquiry in Inverness and heard evidence. They then prepared and published their Scheme. Notice was given of the Scheme by advertisement, and objections were invited, a period of two months being allowed for the lodging of such objections. No objections were put in. The Scheme was submitted to the Scotch Education Department in June, 1885. Certain objections to it had then been lodged. Those objections were considered by the Education Department, and, after considering them, the Department finally approved of the Scheme in March, 1886. Now, on what ground is the House asked to overrule the decision thus come to? It is suggested that some injustice will be done, or may be done, under the Scheme to the objects of the Fund. I do not believe that to be the case. If I did think so, I should not support the Scheme; because I think that those for whom a particular fund is designed should enjoy the benefit of it; and, as long as those who are entitled to it, do enjoy it, it should not be devoted to other purposes, however excellent they may be in themselves. But I think it is impossible to look at the evidence given before the Commissioners at Inverness without seeing that many were admitted to a share in the benefits of the Fund who really could not establish any right to such a share. There seemed to be an idea that all those who bore the name of Mackintosh were entitled to avail themselves of the Fund. That is not so. The Fund was intended for the descendants of four particular families of the clan; but evidence was given to the effect that there had been very great laxity in admitting claimants to share in its benefits. That laxity received the sanction of the Legislature in the Act of 1862, by which it was provided that any claimant should be entitled to share in it, if he could prove that he was related to any person who had hitherto shared. Now, this state of things was brought to the attention of the Commissioners; and, as I understand it, the Commissioners arrived at the conclusion that there really was not—I will not say a supply of claimants, but claimants—that could establish relationship in the terms of the will sufficient to exhaust the whole of the annual income of the Fund, a Fund of £28,000 with an income of something like £800. The Commissioners arrived at the conclusion that two-thirds of the Fund were ample to provide for all who were justly entitled to share in the benefit of the founder's will, and accordingly they devoted one-third to the Inverness Academy. This arrangement may be justified on another ground—that the beneficiaries who are the objects of the founder's bounty are very much interested in the prosperity of that school. It is provided by the will, that the boys who share in the Fund are to be educated at the Inverness Academy, and the Trustees, among whom, I believe, the hon. Member for Inverness-shire was one, presented to the Commissioners a proposal that one-fourth of the Fund should be devoted to the support of the Inverness Academy. The Trustees supported that proposal by this statement, to which I invite the attention of the House—

> "The Trustees consider the efficiency of the Inverness Academy a matter in which they, as Trustees of the Fund, are deeply interested; indeed, they consider that the efficiency of this school is quite essential to the due execution of the purposes of Captain Mackintosh's will."

That proposal was made by the Trustees of the Fund, and the scheme adopted by the Commissioners only varies that proposal to the extent of appropriating one-third instead of one-fourth; there is no difference in principle whatever. The Scheme is generally approved in Inverness; and, under the circumstances, I hope the House will not adopt the Motion of the hon. Member for Inverness-shire, which would have the effect of upsetting a Scheme allowed to be beneficial to education in that town.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): The Resolution moved by the hon. Member for Inverness-shire raises a much more important question, and a more general question affecting education, than the hon. and learned Member who has just spoken imagines. Under the old parochial system, education was of such a nature that lads were prepared for the University; but, in consequence of the introduction of the school board system of education, the old standard of education, whereby young lads were prepared for the University, has been gradually altered, and the result now is, that the higher education formerly given in the parochial schools of Scotland is no longer given under the school board system; and, therefore, with a view to giving secondary education in Scotland, it has been found necessary to appropriate—or rather misappropriate—educational endowments. As for the school board system of education in Scotland, we find that notwithstanding it has been in operation since 1873, and notwithstanding that it is now in possession of nearly £1,000,000 of money—£443,000 from the rates, and £550,000 from the National Exchequer, for the purposes of education—in spite of that enormous expenditure of money, we find that education in Scotland, as stated by the Inspectors of Schools for the Northern Division, stands lower than it did in 1873. Indeed, it is asserted by these Inspectors that secondary education is almost driven out of the board schools altogether. Now, it is in order to secure to the public this secondary education which has been driven out of the parochial schools by the school board system, that recourse has been had to appropriations of these educational endowments. It is part of the general principle acted upon by the Educational Endowments Commissioners. As regards the Inverness School, it is a school with both a primary and secondary department. As to primary education, I ask on what principle ought primary schools in Inverness to be supported solely by educational endowment funds? If primary education is to be given to foundationers, surely those parties ought to receive their education at board or State-aided schools, where they will get the advantage of public grants and of local rates. I ask any Member in the House, on what principle an educational fund for poor persons should be appropriated to provide necessary elementary education without any aid from local rates or Government grant? Then, as to secondary education, reference has been made to the fact that these lads were to be educated at Inverness Academy. That was part of the direction of the deed of endowment; but it is one thing to pay for the expense of the foundationers at Inverness Academy, which is supported by voluntary effort, and quite another thing to take over the responsibility of maintaining the Academy at the expense of charity funds. We do not object to foundationers being sent to Inverness Academy, and the expense of their education falling on the Fund; but on what principle can it be contended that the educational fund should be applied to the maintenance of a school for primary and secondary education—that the middle and upper classes, who are able to pay high fees, should have a school maintained for their benefit at the expense of an educational endowment? In that way you promote secondary education at the expense of a fund intended for poor persons. Those who get the benefit are not those for whom the Fund was intended; you supply a first-class education, at less than cost price, to those well able to pay high fees for those educational advantages. Our whole proposition, then, is this—we maintain that the Fund ought to be applied simply for the payment of fees at primary schools that already exist; for on what principle could it be said that foundationers, poor persons, should have a foundationer's superior education to that provided for the rest of the population? Surely, if you have primary and secondary schools in Inverness suitable for the rest of the community, these schools ought to be suitable for the class of persons intended to be benefited by the educational endowments. But that is not the object of the Educational Endowment Commissioners. They find that the school board system is banishing secondary education from public schools, and this can be tested by the Reports of Inspectors and those who have had experience in these matters; and so they have had recourse to educational endowments to restore that which the school board system has abolished.

Mr. HALDANE (Haddington): I cannot help thinking that the hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division of Glasgow has become confused among the multitude of Scotch Education Schemes now before the House; certainly, the present Scheme raises no such question of principle as he seems to imagine. It does not propose to take a benefit from one class and give it to another; it does not do what is so often called the robbing the poor; it proposes simply to disentangle, to make plain and workable the provisions of a very intricate will, with a due regard to the public interest. It is right that the House should have, in a sentence or two, the facts of the case before it; and I take those facts, not from the Scheme itself, for they do not appear there; not from the Report of the Commission, for they do not appear there; but from the Preamble of a Private Act of 1862, passed for the purpose of disentangling this Scheme of Endowment. A certain William Mackintosh, Commander of the ship *Hindustan*, in the Honourable East India Company's Service, in 1797, made a will, by which he desired, among other things, to leave a certain fund to be devoted to the education of certain boys belonging to some families of the remarkable names mentioned in this Scheme. There has been some difficulty in tracing the descendants of these different families; and, I believe, it has been alleged, though this is only on hearsay, that the real descendants were all extinguished at the battle of Culloden. The testator, after declaring that he thought it right to provide for the education of these boys, in the hope that some of them, if they succeeded in life, would follow his example and help to keep up what he called "a respectable though declining clan," provided, among other acts of liberality, that five of these boys should be educated in the Inverness Academy. Difficulty was experienced in tracing out the descendants of the original families; and the result was, that for the purpose of carrying into effect this very intricate will, it became necessary to provide a Private Act of Parliament. The fund was of considerable amount, and how it came to its present amount is remarkable, having regard to the fact that it once formed the subject of a Chancery suit, and afterwards of an action of Multiple Poinding in the Court of Session; but the fact remains that it was decided by a Private Act in 1862 that these boys were to be educated in a particular way at the Inverness Academy. Now, this Scheme does not alter the Preamble, the Act, or the will in the least; it only takes a third of the overgrown fund which was intended to be applied to educational purposes, and makes use of this third for the improvement of the Inverness Academy, and for the education of the very boys provided for by the testator's will. In fact, the Scheme does not change or deal with any principle at all. It does not deal with the question the hon. Member (Mr. Caldwell) has sought to raise; it raises no controversial matter; it makes plain what ought to have been made plain long ago, with due regard to the interests in view, and for this reason I support it.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities): If the hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division (Mr. Caldwell) desires to make an attack on the School Act, he has, indeed, chosen a bad opportunity for doing so. That Act may or may not be a bad Act, but it has nothing to do with this Scheme, which deals with a much smaller matter, though still a matter of some importance. When hon. Members really consider the question in the light of the facts as they stand, they will see that it would be a very strong measure indeed to stop the action taken by the Commissioners in making this arrangement of this large Fund. At present it is applied for the purpose of providing bursaries to the amount of £34 a-year and £10 for school fees and books; and it is proposed to provide, under this Scheme, for bursaries for the most promising boys, and I suppose it is not contended that these bursaries should be open to every boy who may have a claim on the Fund; they should be made matter of selection, and be the reward of diligent study in the early stage of education. The hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. Fraser Mackintosh) says this Scheme has been framed in an arbitrary manner; but what is it that he alleges has been done in an arbitrary manner? He and his friends were perfectly willing, and themselves drew up a plan by which the very same changes should be made, with this exception, that under their Scheme a quarter of the income of the Fund would have been handed over for the purpose to which the Scheme of the Commissioners purposes to devote one-third. That is the only arbitrary action that can be alleged, and the House is asked, upon a few words delivered here at 2 o'clock in the morning, to set aside this well-considered and generally-approved Scheme. The hon. Member (Mr. Caldwell) has spoken against the promotion of secondary education at the Inverness Academy; but if he knew the Scheme a little better, he would know that it is absolutely essential that there should be in Inverness a fully-equipped school, at which the boys can get the full benefit of the bursaries they enjoy. That has not been the case in the past, but, by the aid of the Fund, there will be that fully equipped school for the benefit of all on the bursar list. The Scheme is supported by all the public opinion of Inverness, approved by public Bodies, the entire Press, the Town Council and the School Board, and I trust the House will not, under the circumstances, interpose to stop the Scheme.

Question put.

The House *divided*:—Ayes 24; Noes 151: Majority 127.—(Div. List, No. 95.)

TRURO BISHOPRIC AND CHAPTER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [*Lords*].

Read a second time, and *committed* to a Select Committee of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House and Two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill, presented three clear days before the meeting of the Committee, be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (WALES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Kenyon, Bill for the promotion of Intermediate Education in Wales, *ordered* to be brought in by Mr. Kenyon, Mr. Puleston, Mr. Walsh, and Admiral Mayne.

Bill *presented*, and read the first time. [Bill 235.]

House adjourned at Two o'clock.

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VOLUME CCCXIII.

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l. Read 3ª * *April* 1 (No. 52)

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(*Mr. James Maclean, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Lees*)
c. Considered in Committee; Resolution agreed to, and reported; Bill ordered; read 1° * *April* 5 [Bill 218]

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Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill
(*Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland*)
Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [28th March], "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the prevention and punishment of Crime in Ireland; and for other purposes relating thereto" (*Mr. Arthur Balfour*); Question again proposed; Debate resumed [Fourth Night] *Mar* 31, 88; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Fifth Night] *April* 1, 245
Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "this House will immediately resolve itself into a Committee to consider the state of Ireland" (*Mr. Parnell*) *v.*, 270; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. T. P. O'Connor*); after short debate, Question put; A. 254, N. 361; M. 107 (D. L. 84)
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Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill—cont.
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Main Question put, and agreed to
Bill ordered; read 1° * [Bill 217]
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 5, 512
Amendt. To leave out from "That," add "this House, being of opinion that the Bill, if it should become Law, will tend to increase disorder in Ireland, and to endanger the Union between that Country and the other parts of the Empire, declines to proceed further with the said Bill" (*Sir Bernhard Samuelson*) *v.*; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after long debate, Debate adjourned
Debate resumed [Second Night] *April* 6, 624; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Third Night] *April* 12, 709; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Fourth Night] *April* 13, 812; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Fifth Night] *April* 14, 892; after long debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Sixth Night] *April* 15, 1006; after long debate, Moved, "That Mr. Timothy Michael Healy be suspended from the Service of the House" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*); Question put; A. 118, N. 52; M. 66
Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1087
After short debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed [Seventh Night] *April* 18, 1129; after long debate, Question put; A. 370, N. 269; M. 101
Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1232
Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°

Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Secretary Matthews, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland*)
c. Read 2° *April* 21, 1545 [Bill 196]

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(*Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Jackson*)
c. Considered in Committee *April* 21
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c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 20 [Bill 231]

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Amendt. on Committee of Supply *April* 4, to leave out from "That," add "in the opinion of this House, the Board of Trade should decide on the policy of the works to be undertaken, and that the functions of the Loan Commissioners should be limited to deciding on the sufficiency of the security offered by applicants for loans" (*Mr. Duff*) *v.*, 386; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after debate, Amendt. withdrawn

Harbour Works Loans
Hypothecation of Local Rates, Question, Mr. Marjoribanks; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 5, 503; Question, Admiral Mayne; Answer, The Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) *April* 7, 682

Harbours of Refuge
Moved, "That, having regard to the recent fearful sacrifice of life in the Bristol Channel, and to the constantly recurring losses of life and property around the coasts of the United Kingdom, it is, in the opinion of this House, urgent that Her Majesty's Government should immediately take action to diminish these losses by the construction of suitable Harbours of Refuge" (*Mr. Yeo*) *April* 19, 1250; after debate, Question put; A. 81, N. 86; M. 5 (D. L. 93)

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Question, Admiral Mayne; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *April* 4, 348

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Harrington, Mr. T. C., *Dublin, Harbour*
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Hayne, Mr. C. Seale-, *Devon, Ashburton*
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Mr. Kelly, Clerk of Petty Sessions at Toomebridge, Co. Antrim, Question, Mr. Pinkerton; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 5, 500; Question, Mr. H. Campbell; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 7, 694

LAW AND POLICE (IRELAND)

Mr. Ferriter, of Dingle, Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Chance, Mr. Edward Harrington; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Mar* 31, 62

Attack upon Rev. Matthew Macaulay, Presbyterian Minister, of Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan, Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. Sinclair, Mr. O'Hanlon, Mr. Clancy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 14, 873; Question, Mr. P. O'Brien; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 22, 1624

H. O'Neill, Bailiff at Mitchelstown, Questions, Mr. Biggar, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour); Question, Mr. O'Hanlon [No reply] *April* 14, 877

THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY

A Force sent to Randalstown, Co. Antrim, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 7, 693

Extra Police Station in Co. Waterford, Question, Mr. Pyne; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Mar* 31, 55

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IRELAND—*The Royal Irish Constabulary*—cont.

Prohibition of Intercourse, Question, Mr. P. M'Donald; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 14, 882

Refusal to Arrest a Roman Catholic Priest, Question, Mr. Finucane; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 1, 225;—*Arrest of the Rev. M. Ryan—Dismissal of Sub-Constable Dorney,* Questions, Mr. Finucane, Mr. Edward Harrington; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 7, 680

The Recent Resignations, Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 18, 1123

Alleged Arrest of —— M'Nulty, Co. Roscommon, Question, Mr. O'Kelly; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 12, 703

Transfer of Sergeant Moloney to Mount Norris, Question, Mr. Blane; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 21, 1406

Constable Osborough, Co. Down, Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 4, 360

PRISONS (IRELAND)

Accommodation in Irish Gaols, Question, Mr. Nolan; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 25, 1795

Closing of Richmond Prison, Dublin, Questions, Mr. Murphy, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 4, 355

General Prisons Board for Ireland—Sale of Convict Farm, Lusk, Co. Dublin, Questions, Mr. Clancy; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 18, 1110

CRIME AND OUTRAGE (IRELAND)

Alleged Outrage on a Girl in Tipperary, Question, Mr. P. J. O'Brien; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour); Question, Mr. T. M. Healy [No reply] *April* 1, 228

Alleged Assaults on Three Girls at Cullen, near Millstreet, Questions, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 15, 997; Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 18, 1120

Attempted Murder of Mr. Jeremiah Hegarty, J.P., Questions, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Dillon Mr. Flynn; Answers, Mr. Speaker, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 21, 1412

The Riots at Belfast

Cumulative Sentences for Assaults, Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 1, 223

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IRELAND—*Crime and Outrage—The Riots at Belfast*—cont.

Colonel Forbes, R.M., and Mr. M'Carthy, R.M., Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 5, 489

Assault on John Johnstone, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 7, 688

The Commission, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 7, 698

The Riots at Lurgan

Questions, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Mar* 31, 60

The Riots at Youghal

Death of Hanlon—Arrest of Sub-Inspector Somerville and Constable Ward, Questions, Mr. Lane, Mr. T. C. Harrington; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar* 31, 86; Questions, Mr. T. C. Harrington, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *April* 4, 353

Injuries to the Police, Question, Mr. J. O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 1, 225; Questions, Dr. Tanner; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 4, 365

EVICTIONS (IRELAND)

Constable Golden—Refusal to Act, Questions, Mr. D. Sullivan, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 18, 1105

The Glenbeigh Evictions, Question, Mr. T. Fry; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *Mar* 31, 53

The Quarterly Return, Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 15, 998

Lord Cork's Estate in Ventry—Obstruction of Police, Questions, Mr. Edward Harrington; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 1, 222

Marquess of Lansdowne's Estate, Queen's Co., Question, Mr. J. E. Ellis; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 18, 1106

The Skinners' Estate, Draperstown, Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman) *April* 25, 1784

Irish Land Law Bill

Question, Lord Brabourne; Answer, The Lord Privy Seal (Earl Cadogan) *April* 1, 187; Observation, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 4, 370; Question, Mr. Dillon; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 7, 698; Question, Earl Spencer; Answer, The Lord Privy Seal (Earl Cadogan) *April* 19, 1241

Leaseholders, Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *April* 5, 510; *April* 6, 623

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Irish Land Law Bill—cont.
Perpetuity Leaseholders, Question, Mr. Marum; Answer, The Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland (Colonel King-Harman), *April* 25, 1795

Irish Land Law Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Privy Seal*)
l. Presented; read 1ª, after debate *Mar* 31, 2
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *April* 21, 1354 (No. 58)
Amendt. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Denman*); after debate, Debate further adjourned
Debate resumed *April* 22, 1551; after long debate, on Question, that ("now,") &c., resolved in the affirmative; Bill read 2ª

ISAACS, Mr. L. H., *Newington, Walworth*
Kensington Vestry, 3R. 46
Merchant Shipping—Loss of the "Victoria" in Crossing the Channel, 1115
Metropolitan Management Acts Amendment (No. 2), 2R. 461
Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, Consid. *add. cl.* 1549
Post Office—Exercise of Official Patronage, 454
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1442

ISAACSON, Mr. F. Wootton, *Tower Hamlets, Stepney*
England—Boycotting and Intimidation, 1699
West Lancashire Railway, Consid. 1613, 1615, 1616, 1617, 1618, 1620, 1621

Isle of Man (Customs) Bill
(*The Earl Beauchamp*)
l. Read 2ª * *April* 18 (No. 56)
Committee *; Report *April* 19
Read 3ª * *April* 21

Italy and the German Powers—Rumoured Alliance
Observations, Question, Lord Stratheden and Campbell; Reply, The Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (The Marquess of Salisbury) *Mar* 31, 37

JACKSON, Mr. W. L. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Leeds, N.*
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Harbour Loans, Res. 390, 392, 399
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JACOBY, Mr. J. A., *Derbyshire, Mid*
England—Boycotting and Intimidation, 1712

JAMES, Hon. W. H., *Gateshead*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 844
Ireland — Criminal Law Amendment — The Whiteboy Acts, 70

JARVIS, Mr. A. W., *Lynn Regis*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 640, 644, 645

JERSEY, Earl of
Railway and Canal Traffic, Comm. *cl.* 25, Amendt. 196

JOHNSTON, Mr. W., *Belfast, S.*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 304, 305; 2R. 1095
Ireland—Questions
  Crime and Outrage—Attempted Murder of Mr. Jeremiah Hegarty, J.P. 1412;—Riots at Lurgan, 61
  Inspectors of Irish Fisheries—Destruction of Fish Fry on Lough Neagh, 992
  Post Office at Rathmines Road, Dublin, and "The Freeman's Journal," 1244, 1245
Lunatic Asylums—Attendance of Bands at Public Meetings, 1790
Parliament — Privilege — Reflections on the Speaker of this House, 375, 376
Post Office (England and Wales)—South Kensington Exhibition—Free Postage, 217
Post Office—Sunday Delivery of Letters, Res. 1296

JOICEY, Mr. J., *Durham, Chester-le-Street*
Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1741, 1753
Russia—Imprisonment of Mr. J. W. Robinson, a British Subject, 1627

JORDAN, Mr. J., *Clare, W.*
Ireland — Law and Police — Kilrush Petty Sessions—Dismissal of a Summons, 687, 706

Justices' Jurisdiction Bill [H.L.]
(*Mr. Lockwood*)
c. Read 2º *April* 18, 1237 [Bill 201]

KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Right Hon. Sir U. J., *Lancashire, Clitheroe*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland). 2R. 863
Education Department—Political Meetings in Schoolrooms, 1684

KENNAWAY, Sir J. H., *Devon, Honiton*
Post Office—Sunday Delivery of Letters, &c. Res. Amendt. 1291

Kenny, Dr. J. E., *Cork, S.*
Admiralty—Floating Dock at Haulbowline, 219
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Ireland—Dublin Hospital Commission—Report and Evidence, 361
Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, Comm. 185
Parliament—Questions—Alteration or Omission from Notice Paper, 232

Kenny, Mr. M. J., *Tyrone, Mid*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 714, 724, 903, 904, 968, 971, 982
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Ireland—Law and Justice—Jury Panels, 471, 472
Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1725, 1734, 1741, 1757
Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 607

Kensington Vestry Bill [*Lords*] (*by Order*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3°" (*Sir Charles Forster*) *Mar* 31, 39
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Sir Roper Lethbridge*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 103, N. 164; M. 61 (D. L. 83)
Words added; Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to; Third Reading put off

Kilmorey, Earl of
Irish Land Law, 2R. 1385

Kimber, Mr. H., *Wandsworth*
Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2), 2R. 463

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Irish Land Law, 2R. 1565

King, Mr. H. S., *Hull, Central*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 117
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India—Uncovenanted Service, 1408
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King-Harman, Right Hon. Colonel E. R. (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Ireland), *Kent, Isle of Thanet*
Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Slaughter of Dairy Cows in Dublin, 1786
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 260, 301, 304, 305, 306, 308, 315
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  Board of National Education—Mr. J. A. Irwin, Carrickawilkin, Co. Armagh, 1783, 1784

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King-Harman, Right Hon. Colonel E. R.—*cont.*
  Crime and Outrage—Alleged Assault on Three Girls at Cullen, near Millstreet, 1121;—Attempted Murder of Mr. Jeremiah Hegarty, J.P. 1413
  Criminal Lunatic Asylum, Dundrum—Alleged Assault, 1398, 1399
  Infirmaries—Wicklow Co. Infirmary, 1408
  Irish Land Law—Perpetuity Leaseholders, 1795
  Labourers' Act—Dundalk Union, 1110
  Law and Justice—Newry Petty Sessions—Conviction of William Durnan, a Person of Unsound Mind, 1118;—Rev. Matthew Ryan, C.C. 1412
  Law and Police—Attack upon Rev. Matthew Macaulay, Presbyterian Minister of Castleblayney, 1625
  Local Government—Town Commissioners of Portadown, 1624
  National School Teachers—Payment of Results Fees, 1106;—Roundstone, 1109
  Poor Law—David Brooks, Master of the Armagh Workhouse, 1401
  Prisons—Accommodation in Irish Gaols, 1795;—General Prisons Board for Ireland—Sale of Convict Farm, Lusk, Co. Dublin, 1111
  Royal Irish Constabulary—Transfer of Sergeant Malony to Mount Norris, 1497
Ireland—Evictions—Questions
  Constable Golden—Refusal to Act, 1105
  Marquess of Lansdowne's Estate, Queen's Co. 1106
  Skinners' Estate, Draperstown, 1785
Ireland—Magistracy—Questions
  Bantry and Dunno Petty Sessions—District Inspector Crane, 1784
  Messrs. Warren St. Leger Woods and James Hamilton Woods, 1112
  Mr. T. N. Cullen, Divisional Magistrate of Belfast, 1107
  Resident Magistrates, 1407
Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, Consid. *add. cl.* 1547

Labouchere, Mr. H., *Northampton*
Africa (West Coast)—Royal Niger Company—Sentence of Death on ——Shaw, 1788, 1789
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 88, 101; 2R. 655, 895
Egypt—Assault on Two English Officers, 484
Jubilee Year of Her Majesty's Reign, Celebration of—Service in Westminster Abbey, 1415
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  Sittings and Adjournment of the House—Easter Recess, 509;—Public Business, 892
Post Office—Free Postage to the South Kensington Exhibition, 368

Lafone, Mr. A., *Southwark, Bermondsey*
Trade and Commerce—Petroleum Trade, 1627

LALOR, Mr. R., *Queen's Co., Leix*
Ireland—Lunatic Asylums—Maryborough District Lunatic Asylum, 350

Land Tenure (Scotland) Bill
(*Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Barclay, Sir George Balfour, Dr. Farquharson*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 20, 1322 [Bill 19]
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Mr. R. G. Webster*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after debate, Debate adjourned

Land Transfer Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Presented; read 1ª, after short debate *Mar* 31, 27 (No. 57)
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª" *April* 25, 1758
Amendt. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Arundell of Wardour*); after debate, Amendt. withdrawn; Original Motion agreed to; Bill read 2ª

Land Transfer Bill—Land Registration in Prussia
Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *April* 14, 883

LANE, Mr. W. J., *Cork Co., E.*
Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Riots at Youghal—Death of Hanlon—Arrest of Sub-Inspector Somerville and Constable Ward, 86

LAURIE, Colonel R. P., *Bath*
Coastguard and Lifeboat Stations—Telegraphic Communication, 500

LAW AND JUSTICE (ENGLAND AND WALES)
(*Questions*)
Unclaimed Funds in Chancery—Alleged Payment of £72,000 — The Whaddon Hall Estates, Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, Sir Herbert Maxwell (A Lord of the Treasury) *April* 15, 995
George Chapman, J.P., a Bankrupt, Question, Mr. Maclure; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 31, 74
Sentence on Annie Shipton, Convicted of Child Desertion, Question, Mr. J. Rowlands; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 7, 695; Question, Mr. Pickersgill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 14, 884
Criminal Statistics — Police Reports, Questions, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. John Morley, Sir George Campbell, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Chance; Answers, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen), The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour), The Attorney General for Ireland (Mr. Holmes) *Mar* 31, 87
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High Court of Justice—Publication of Details in Divorce and Indecent Cases, Observations, Mr. Samuel Smith; Reply, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster); short debate thereon *April* 22, 1660
Crime—Boycotting and Intimidation in England, Question, Mr. Newnes; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 5, 505; Observations, Mr. Newnes; debate thereon *April* 22, 1687

THE MAGISTRACY
Appointment of Welsh Magistrates—Nonconformists (Flintshire), Questions, Mr. P. O'Brien, Mr. T. E. Ellis; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 4, 354
Poole and Wrexham, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 31, 59

LAW AND POLICE (*Questions*)
English and Irish Constabulary, The—Annual Leave of Absence, Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 18, 1115
Search by the Police at Hoyland Silkstone (Barnsley), Question, Mr. Pickard; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 6, 622
The late Dog Regulations, Question, Observations, The Earl of Milltown; Reply, The Lord President of the Council (Viscount Cranbrook) *April* 18, 1101

LAWRENCE, Mr. W. F., *Liverpool, Abercromby*
Africa (West Coast)—Kidnapping on the Niger—Native Reprisals, 676, 677
Merchant Shipping—"Mary Mark," 1627

LAWSON, Mr. H. L. W., *St. Pancras, W.*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 127
Land Transfer—Land Registration in Prussia, 883
Market Rights, Motion for an Address, 1651
Metropolis (Parks)—Boating in Regent's Park, 359
War Office—Mr. J. Fleming, Veterinary Surgeon-in-Chief, War Department, 360
Suicide of J. F. Connolly, a War Office Draftsman, 1246

LEA, Mr. T., *Londonderry, S.*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. Motion for Adjournment, 598, 624, 631

LEAKE, Mr. R., *Lancashire, S.E., Radcliffe*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 1091

LEES, Mr. E., *Oldham*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 633

LEFEVRE, Right Hon. G. J. Shaw, *Bradford, Central*
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LEGH, Mr. T. W., *Lancashire, S.W., Newton*
Afghanistan—Reported Disturbances, 1799

LEIGHTON, Mr. S., *Shropshire, Oswestry*
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LETHBRIDGE, Sir R., *Kensington, N.*
Kensington Vestry, 3R. Amendt. 39

LEWIS, Sir C. E., *Antrim, N.*
Harbours of Refuge, Res. 1269
Ireland—Post Office—Letterkenny, 1780
Municipal Trust Company, 2R. 870
Parliamentary Elections (England and Wales)—Alleged Boycotting and Intimidation in England, 1800

Lighthouse Illuminants—The Experiments at South Foreland
Question, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 22, 1625

Limited Owners (Scotland) Bill
(*Mr. Haldane, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Mr. Ferguson*)
c. Select Committee nominated *April* 22; List of the Committee, 1757 [Bill 8]

Literature, Science, and Art—Action of Light on Water Colours
Question, Sir Algernon Borthwick; Answer, The Vice President of the Council (Sir William Hart Dyke) *April* 4, 356

LLEWELLYN, Mr. E. H., *Somerset, N.*
England—Boycotting and Intimidation, 1694, 1706
Harbours of Refuge, Res. 1282

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—President (*see* RITCHIE, Right Hon. C. T.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—Secretary to (*see* LONG, Mr. W. H.)

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (Carrick-on-Suir) Bill [H.L.]
c. Report * *April* 1 [Bill 200]
Read 3° * *April* 4

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (Limerick Water) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Privy Seal*)
l. Read 2ª * *April* 19 (No. 42)
Committee *; Report *April* 21
Read 3ª * *April* 22
c. Read 1° * *April* 25 [Bill 236]

Local Government Provisional Orders Bill (*Mr. Long, Mr. Ritchie*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 1 [Bill 216]
Read 2° * *April* 15
Report * *April* 22
Read 3° * *April* 25

Local Government Provisional Order (Highways) Bill
(*Mr. Long, Mr. Ritchie*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 15 [Bill 224]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) Bill
(*Mr. Long, Mr. Ritchie*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 18 [Bill 226]

Local Government Provisional Orders (Poor Law) (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. Long, Mr. Ritchie*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 18 [Bill 227]

LOCKWOOD, Mr. F., *York*
High Court of Justice—Publication of Details in Divorce and Indecent Cases, 1669

LONG, Mr. W. H. (Secretary to the Local Government Board), *Wilts, Devizes*
Harbour Works Loans — Hypothecation of Rates, 682

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LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND — Chief Secretary to the (*see* BALFOUR, Right Hon. A. J.)

LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND—Parliamentary Under Secretary to the (*see* KING-HARMAN, Right Hon. Colonel E. R.)

LOWTHER, Mr. J. W., *Cumberland, Penrith*
Pharmacy Acts Amendment, Comm. 616

LUBBOCK, Sir J., *London University*
Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, Comm. 183; Consid. *add. cl.* 1547
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Lunacy Bill [H.L.] (*The Lord Chancellor*)
l. Committee *; Report *Mar* 31 (No. 8)
Read 3ª * *April* 1

Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill
(*Mr. Solicitor General*)
c. Read 1°* *April* 13 [Bill 221]

Lunatic Asylums—Attendance of Bands at Public Meetings
- Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Johnston; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 25, 1789

McArthur, Mr. A., *Leicester*
- Post Office—Sunday Delivery of Letters, Res. 1296

McCartan, Mr. M., *Down, S.*
- Army—Auxiliary Forces—North Down Militia, 221
  - Royal Irish Rifles—Removal from Newtownards to Donaghadee, 675
- Ireland—Questions
  - Commissioners of Irish Lights—Lighthouse at Ardglass, 1782
  - Crime and Outrage—Riots at Belfast—Cumulative Sentences for Assaults, 223, 707;—Riots at Lurgan, 60
  - Evictions—Skinners' Estate, Draperstown, 1784
  - Inland Revenue—Removal of an Officer from Bantry to Skibbereen, 675
  - Law and Justice—Cumulative Sentences—Sentence on R. Comerford at Belfast, 499
  - Magistracy—Mr. Charles Brownlow, J.P.—Speech at Crossgar, Co. Down, 1000;—Resident Magistrates, 1407
  - Post Office—Postal Accommodation to Newtownards, &c. 351, 1782
  - Royal Irish Constabulary—Constable Osborough, Co. Down, 360

M'Carthy, Mr. J., *Londonderry*
- Admiralty—Shipbuilding Industry (Ireland)—Shipyard on the Foyle, 1791

M'Carthy, Mr. J. H., *Newry*
- Ireland—Law and Justice—Newry Petty Sessions—Conviction of William Durnan, a Person of Unsound Mind, 1118

Macdonald, Right Hon. J. H. A. (Lord Advocate), *Edinburgh and St. Andrew's Universities*
- Criminal Law (Scotland) Procedure (No. 2), 2R. 1545
- Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission (Inverness Scheme), Motion for an Address, 1945
- Fishermen on the North-East Coast—Tenure of Dwellings, 228
- Land Tenure (Scotland), 2R. 1350
- Police Force Enfranchisement, 2R. 1318
- Scotland—Questions
  - Education Department—Educational Endowments Act, 1882—A Select Committee, 1793;—Paisley Grammar School Examination, 212

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  - Fisheries—Destruction of Immature Fish, 349
  - Fishery Board—Loans to Fishermen of Crofting Parishes, 1114;—Salaries of Officers, 1402
  - Landlord and Tenant—Procedure under the Crofters Act 1804
  - Magistracy—The Sheriff-Substitute of Inverness-shire, 348
  - Public Health Acts—City Epidemic Hospital, Aberdeen, 480

McDonald, Mr. P., *Sligo, N.*
- Harbour Loans, Res. 396
- Ireland—Royal Irish Constabulary—Prohibition of Intercourse, 882

McDonald, Dr. R., *Ross and Cromarty*
- Crofters' Commission, 242

Macdonald, Mr. W. A., *Queen's Co., Ossory*
- Ireland—Post Office—Postmastership at Borris-in-Ossory, Queen's County, 497

McKenna, Sir J. N., *Monaghan, S.*
- Police Force Enfranchisement, 2R. 1321

Mackintosh, Mr. C. Fraser-, *Inverness-shire*
- Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission (Inverness Scheme), Motion for an Address, 1937
- Scotland—Magistracy—The Sheriff-Substitute of Inverness-shire, 348
  - Post Office—Communication in the Western Islands, 53

McLaren, Mr. W. S. B., *Cheshire, Crewe*
- Army and Navy Estimates—The Committee of Examination, 85
- Ireland—Criminal Law Amendment—The Whiteboy Acts, &c. 70, 505, 685
- Police Force Enfranchisement, 2R. 1310, 1311 1312
- Public Health—M. Pasteur's Treatment of Hydrophobia, 1794

Maclean, Mr. J. M., *Oldham*
- Colonial Conference—The Government of India, 85
- Ways and Means, Comm. 1876

Maclure, Mr. J. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Stretford*
- Butter Substitutes and Oleomargarine Bills, Nomination of Select Committee, 1629
- Law and Justice (England and Wales)—George Chapman, J.P., a Bankrupt, 74
- Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1756
- Post Office (England and Wales)—Postal Facilities in Wales—The Cambrian Railway Company, 69

Mac Neill, Mr. J. G. S., *Donegal, S.*
- Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 149

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Mac Neill, Mr. J. G. S.—*cont.*
Finance—Revenue and Expenditure—Exchequer Issues and Receipts, 79
Privy Council in England and Ireland—Attendance of Judges, 232

Malcolm, Colonel J. W., *Argyllshire*
Scotland—Fisheries—Destruction of Immature Fish, 349
Pollutions from the Clyde—Loch Long and Loch Goil, 56

Manners, Right Hon. Lord J. J. R. (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), *Leicestershire, E.*
Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Importation of Cattle from Ireland, 73
Outbreak of Anthrax—Compensation, 689, 690

Mappin, Sir F. T., *York, W.R., Hallamshire*
Inland Revenue—Property and Income Tax—Default of Collectors, 697

Marjoribanks, Right Hon. E., *Berwickshire*
Harbour Loans, Res. 404
Harbour Loans—Security on Local Rates, 503
Harbours of Refuge, Res. 1272

Market Rights
Amendt. on Committee of Supply, *April* 22, to leave out from "That," add "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire as to the extent to which market rights, and rights affecting places where markets are held, are in the hands (1) of public bodies, and (2) of private persons, or bodies of persons. To inquire generally how such rights are exercised, and particularly what accommodation is given in return for charges levied; in what ratio market tolls stand to the value of goods on which they are levied, and how far the regulation of markets by means of bye-laws or otherwise, market rents, stallages, and tolls, and tolls affecting market towns, are restrictive of trade. To report as to the advisability of compelling the transfer of all such rights to local authorities; of prohibiting the farming of tolls and stallages, of prohibiting the placing of restrictions on the sale of goods in a market that may be lawfully sold elsewhere, of providing by means of the incomes from markets or otherwise for the extinction of the capital account chargeable to such markets, and for declaring all markets to be free and open" (*Mr. Bradlaugh*) *v.*, 1642; Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and agreed to

Marlborough, Duke of
Land Transfer, 2R. 1759

Marriages (Attendance of Registrars) Bill
Question, Mr. Picton; Answer, The Attorney General (Sir Richard Webster) *April* 5, 490

Marriott, Right Hon. W. T. (Judge Advocate General), *Brighton*
Belfast Main Drainage, Lords' Amendts. Consid. 39

Marum, Mr. E. P. M., *Kilkenny, N.*
Irish Land Law—Perpetuity Leaseholders, 1795

Mason, Mr. S., *Lanark, Mid*
Defence of the Egyptian Frontier — Unauthorized Expenditure, 506
Ways and Means, Comm. 1905

Matthews, Right Hon. H. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Birmingham, E.*
Burials (England and Wales)—Hayward's Heath Burial Scandal, 876
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Channel Islands—Militia Law of Jersey, 1404
Civil Service Commission — Report on the Clerical Establishment, 490
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 779, 780, 798, 960
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English and Irish Constabulary—Annual Leave of Absence, 1115
Ireland — Criminal Law Amendment — The Whiteboy Acts and the Later Statutes, 624
  Law and Justice—Cumulative Sentences—Sentence on R. Comerford at Belfast, 499
Law and Justice (England and Wales)—George Chapman, J.P., a Bankrupt, 74;—Sentence on Annie Shipton, Convicted of Child Desertion, 696, 884
Law and Police—Search by the Police at Hoyland Silkstone (Barnsley), 622
Lunatic Asylums — Attendance of Bands at Public Meetings, 1790
Magistracy (England and Wales)—Appointment of Welsh Magistrates—Nonconformists, 354, 355
  Pool and Wrexham, 60
Mines—Questions
  Coal Mines—Inspectors of Weights and Measures, 486
  Coal Mines, &c. Regulation—The Second Reading, 621
  Royal Commission for the Prevention of Accidents—Coal Mines Regulation, 83
Mines Regulation Acts—Appointment to the Inspectorship of the South-Western District, 59
Parliament—Business of the House—Easter Recess, 700
  House of Commons—All-night Sitting of March 21—Extra Pay to Messengers, 689;—Police Constables, 881, 882
Police (England and Wales)—County Police and Municipal Boroughs, 353

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Police Force Enfranchisement, 2R. 1316, 1321, 1322
Police (Metropolis)—Abolition of Marlborough Street Police Court, 1790
Public Health—M. Pasteur's Treatment of Hydrophobia, 1794
Quarries—Regulation and Inspection, 364
Shop Hours Regulation Act, 1886—Procedure, 67
Trade and Commerce—The Petroleum Trade, 1627
Wales, Administration of Justice in—Official and Sworn Interpreters, 1792

MAXWELL, Sir H. E. (A Lord of the Treasury), *Wigton*
Funds in Chancery—Alleged Payment of £72,000—The Whadden Hall Estates, 995
Income Tax Collectors—Superannuation, 993
Ireland—Excise Department—Proposed Reduction of Staff, 993

MAYNE, Admiral R. C., *Pembroke and Haverfordwest*
Harbours of Refuge, Res. 1271
Harbours of Refuge and Sife-Saving Harbours, 348
Harbour Works Loans — Hypothecation of Rates, 682

Merchandise Marks Act (1862) Amendment Bill (*Baron Henry De Worms, Mr. Attorney General*)
c. Select Committee nominated *April 5*; List of the Committee, 619 [Bill 142]

Merchant Shipping
Boats of Ocean-Going Vessels, Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 25, 1781
Loss of the "Kapunda," Question, Mr. Atherley-Jones; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 5, 498
The "Mary Mark," Question, Mr. W. F. Lawrence; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *April* 22, 1627
Wreck of the Channel Steamer "Victoria," Question, Mr. Howard Vincent; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 14, 886; Question, Mr. Isaacs; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 18, 1115;—*The D'Ailly Lighthouse*, Questions, Mr. T. W. Russell; Answer, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 21, 1410

Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2) Bill
(*Mr. King, Sir Edward Birkbeck, Mr. Lacaita, Mr. White, Mr. Puleston, Lord Claud Hamilton, Admiral Field, Mr. Bond*)
c. Committee—R.P. *April* 5, 612 [Bill 184]
Committee—R.P. *April* 22, 1714

Merchant Shipping (Fishing Boats) Acts Amendment Bill
(*The Lord Stanley of Preston*)
l. Read 2ª * *April* 1 (No. 51)
Committee *; Report *April* 19
Read 3ª * *April* 21

Merchant Shipping (Transfer of Registry, &c.) Bill [H.L.]
(*The Lord Stanley of Preston*)
l. Presented; read 1ª * *Mar* 31 (No. 59)

Mersey Railway Bill
c. Considered *April* 20, 1300

METROPOLIS (*Questions*)
Distress in the Metropolis, Question, Mr. Flower; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *April* 25, 1797
Police—Abolition of Marlborough Street Police Court, Question, Mr. Pitt-Lewis; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 25, 1790
The Parks—Boating in Regent's Park, Question, Mr. Lawson; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *April* 4, 359
Metropolitan Improvements — Hyde Park Corner, Question, Dr. Tanner; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *April* 5, 492

Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill *Mr. Octavius Morgan, Mr. Gilliat, Mr. Kimber*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 4, 461; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Two to be nominated by the House and Three by the Committee of Selection [Bill 167]
Moved, "That Mr. Gilliat be a Member of the Select Committee" *April* 5, 602; after short debate, Motion withdrawn
Select Committee nominated *April* 18

Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension Bill (*Sir John Lubbock Mr. Dalrymple, Sir Charles Forster, Mr Houldsworth, Mr. Reid, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Salt*)
c. Committee; Report *Mar* 31, 182 [Bill 214]
Considered *April* 21, 1547
Read 3° * *April* 22
l. Read 1ª * (*Lord Mount-Temple*) *April* 25 (No. 69)

Metropolitan Police Provisional Orde Bill (*Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Secretary Matthews*)
c. Read 2° * *April* 1 [Bill 206]
Report * *April* 14
Read 3° * *April* 15
l. Read 1ª * (*Earl Beauchamp*) *April* 18 (No. 65)

Midleton, Viscount
Irish Land Law, 2R. 1377

Milltown, Earl of
Irish Land Law, 1R. 10; 2R. 1393, 1591
Law and Police—The Late Dog Regulations, 1101, 1102

Mines, The Royal Commission for the Prevention of Accidents in—Coal Mines Regulation Bill
Question, Mr. Coghill; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 31, 83

Mines Regulation Acts—Appointment to the Inspectorship of the South Western District
Question, Mr. Conybeare; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *Mar* 31, 59
[See title *Coal Mines Regulation Act*]

Molloy, Mr. B. C., *King's Co., Birr*
Post Office—Exercise of Official Patronage, 452, 459

Monk-Bretton, Lord
Railway and Canal Traffic, Comm. *cl.* 23, 190

Montagu, Mr. S., *Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel*
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1480, 1488

Monteagle of Brandon, Lord
Land Transfer, 2R. 1761

Morgan, Mr. O. V., *Battersea*
Admiralty—Vacancies—Circulars, 1631
Excise (Metropolis)—Convictions for Selling Adulterated Beer, 1793
Metropolis Management Acts Amendment (No 2), 2R. 461; Comm. 602, 603
Police Force Enfranchisement, 2R. 1309
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Morley, Right Hon. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 179, 277; 2R. 920
Ireland — Executive — Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant—Appointment of Colonel King-Harman, 888, 1002, 1003
Law and Justice (England and Wales)—Criminal Statistics—Police Reports, 87
Parliament — Privilege — Reflections on the Speaker of this House, 375
Parliament—Rules of Debate—Offensive Imputations on Members of this House—Mr. Dillon and the Marquess of Hartington, Personal Explanations, 1642

Mowbray, Mr. R. G. C., *Lancashire, Prestwich*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 178

Mundella, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*
Budget—Appropriation of Surplus to Education in Wales, 1416
Education (Wales), 1248, 1249
Market Rights, Motion for an Address, 1657
Parliament—Business of the House, 1250
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1430, 1446
United States of America — International Industrial Property Convention, 1414

Municipal Elections (Scotland) (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Bill
(*Mr. Lacaita, Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. Shiress Will, Mr. Donald Crawford*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *Mar* 31 [Bill 215]

Municipal Trust Company Bill [*Lords*] (*by Order*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" (*Sir Charles Forster*) *April* 14, 870
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Dr Tanner*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" Question put, and agreed to; Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°

Murphy, Mr. W. M., *Dublin, St. Patrick's*
Ireland—Questions
  Criminal Law Amendment—Prison Accommodation, 58
  Primary Education—The Royal Commission of 1870, 366
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Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1745, 1755
Metropolitan Open Spaces Act (1881) Extension, Consid. *add. cl.* 1547, 1548
Post Office—Exercise of Official Patronage, 456
Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. 609

Navy (*Questions*)
Coastguard and Lifeboat Stations—Telegraphic Communication, Question, Colonel Laurie; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 5, 500
The Committee on Contracts—Naval Contracts, Question, Mr. Caine; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 1, 228
The Floating Dock at Haulbowline, Questions, Dr. Kenny, Mr. J. O'Connor (Tipperary, S.); Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 1, 219
The Mediterranean Squadron—Etiquette of Saluting, Question, Mr. Courley; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 18, 1103

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Obsolete and Useless Ships, Questions, Mr. Norris, Mr. Conybeare; Answers, The Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) *Mar* 31, 70

Secrecy of Designs, &c., Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 7, 683

The Shipbuilding Industry (Ireland)—Shipyard on the Foyle, Question, Mr. Justin M'Carthy; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 25, 1791

Vacancies—The Civil Service Supply Association—Circulars, Question, Mr. O. V. Morgan; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 22, 1631

Personnel

Conversion of the Royal Marine Corps, Question, Sir Samuel Wilson; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 21, 1410

Colour Sergeants of the Royal Marines, Question, Captain Price; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 25, 1796

Dismissal of Lieutenant Hall—The Queen's Regulations, Questions, Mr. Hanbury, Dr. Farquharson, Commander Bethell; Answers, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 7, 696

Resignation of Naval Officers on Half-Pay, Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 15, 998

Resignation of Commissions in the Navy, Question, Commander Bethell; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 18, 1118

Private and Confidential Documents—Lord Brassey's "Naval Annual," Question, Mr. Dwyer Gray; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 15, 999

Prosecution of Mr. Young Terry for Betrayal of Official Information, Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 5, 488

Newnes, Mr. G., *Cambridge, E., Newmarket*
Crime (England and Wales)—Boycotting and Intimidation in England, 505, 1687

Nolan, Colonel J. P., *Galway, N.*
Harbour Loans, Res. 411
Harbours of Refuge, Res. 1287
Ireland—Prisons—Accommodation in Irish Gaols, 1795
Ways and Means, Comm. 1919

Nolan, Mr. J., *Louth, N.*
Ireland—Labourers' Acts — Dundalk Union, 1110

Norris, Mr. E. S., *Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*
Admiralty—Obsolete and Useless Ships, 70
Army—Insanitary State of Dover Barracks, 1117
Post Office—Postal Orders for Small Sums, 359

North America—Gold Discoveries on the Canadian Boundary Line
Question, Mr. Hanbury; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *April* 4, 358

North American Fisheries
Settlement of the Disputes, Question, Mr. Gourley; Answer, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *April* 5, 491
Correspondence, Questions, Mr. Gourley; Answers, The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir James Fergusson) *April* 25, 1799

Northcote, Hon. H. S. (Surveyor General of Ordnance), *Exeter*
Egypt (Soudan) — Suakin-Berber Railway, 1409
War Office (Ordnance Department)—Questions
  Defective Weapons—The Cutlass Committee, 82
  Maxim Machine Gun, 1246
  Return of Guns, 227
  Royal Arsenal, Woolwich—Accoutrement Department—Appointment of "Viewers," 682

North Sea Fisheries—Damages to the Drift Net Fisheries
Questions, Sir Savile Crossley, Sir Edward Birkbeck; Answers, The Secretary to the Board of Trade (Baron Henry De Worms) *April* 12, 705

O'Brien, Mr. J. F. X., *Mayo, S.*
Burmah — Uncovenanted Civil Servants as Volunteers, 217
India—Native Newspaper Press, 217

O'Brien, Mr. P., *Monaghan, N.*
Ireland—Questions
  Board of National Education—Mr. J. A. Irwin, Carrickawilkin, Co. Armagh, 1783, 1784
  Law and Justice—"Egan *v.* Dwyer"—Assault, 478, 479
  Law and Police—Rev. Matthew Macaulay, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan, 873, 1624
  Magistracy—Dr. Clarke, of Philipstown, King's Co. 356;—Mr. T. N. Cullen, Divisional Magistrate of Belfast, 1106, 1107
Magistracy (England and Wales)—Appointment of Welsh Magistrates—Nonconformists, 354
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O'Brien, Mr. P. J., *Tipperary, N.*
Ireland—Crime and Outrage—Alleged Outrage on a Girl in Tipperary, 228
Law and Justice—Rev. Matthew Ryan, C.C. 1411

O'Connor, Mr. A., *Donegal, E.*
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Egypt—Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's Mission—Neutralization of Egypt and the Suez Canal, 503
Inland Revenue—Legacy Duty Office, Somerset House—Compulsory Retirement—Divulgence of Official Secrets, 692
Ireland — Criminal Law Amendment — The Resident Magistrates, 79
Magistracy — Qualification of Resident Magistrates, 369
Law and Justice (England and Wales)—Criminal Statistics—Police Reports, 87
Parliament—Business of the House — Easter Recess, 700, 701
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Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1455

O'Connor, Mr. J., *Tipperary, S.*
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Ireland—Questions
Crime and Outrage—Riots at Youghal—Injuries to the Police, 225
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Labourers' Acts—Birr Union, 680;—Millstreet, Macroom, and Blarney, Co. Cork, 678
Law and Justice—Affray at Mitchelstown, 677;—Macroom Quarter Sessions, 684, 685
Police—Passengers to Ireland—Search of Luggage, 224
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O'Connor, Mr. T. P., *Liverpool, Scotland*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 276; Motion for Adjournment, 320; 2R. 588, 1161, 1162
England—Boycotting and Intimidation, 1697, 1700, 1704
Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1747, 1748, 1752, 1755, 1756
Parliament—Questions—Alteration or Omission from Notice Paper, 233, 234
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O'Doherty, Mr. J. E., *Donegal, N.*
Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts—Importation of Cattle from Ireland, 73

O'Hanlon, Mr. T., *Cavan, E.*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 724, 1086
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Law and Police — H. O'Neill, Bailiff of Mitchelstown, 878;—The Rev. Matthew Macaulay, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan, 875
Magistracy—Derry Petty Sessions—Case of Robert Wallace, 363
Post Office — Grangegeith, 883, 884;—Telegraph Office at Shercock, Co. Cavan, 999
Parliament—Palace of Westminster — Police Constables in the House of Commons, 881, 882

O'Hea, Mr. P., *Donegal, W.*
Harbour Loans, Res. 416

O'Kelly, Mr. J., *Roscommon, N.*
Ireland—Royal Irish Constabulary—Alleged Arrest of —— M'Nulty, Co. Roscommon, 703

Oleomargarine (Fraudulent Sale) Bill
(*Sir Richard Paget, Mr. Sclater-Booth, Mr. Elton, Mr. Mark Stewart*)
c. Read 2°,* and referred to Select Committee on Butter Substitutes Bill [Bill 175]

Ordnance Department—See *Army*

Ordnance — Surveyor General (*see* Northcote, Hon. H. S.)

Ordnance Survey Department—Reductions
Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *Mar* 31, 56

Parliament
LORDS—
Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills
Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92. and 93. be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Easter, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the recess *Mar* 31

COMMONS—
Indisposition of Mr. Speaker
Mr. Courtney, The Chairman of Ways and Means, took the Chair as Deputy Speaker *April* 4, *April* 5, *April* 6, *April* 7
Mr. Speaker acknowledges the indulgence shown during his indisposition *April* 12, 701

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PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*cont.*

Controverted Elections—Norfolk County (North Western Division), Judges' Certificate and Report *April* 12, 702

Public Petitions

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Public Petitions have leave to sit this day, notwithstanding the sitting or the Adjournment of the House (*Sir Charles Forster*) *April* 7

The Ministry—The Irish Land Law Bill and Purchase Bill, Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 1, 232

PRIVILEGE

Reflections on the Speaker of this House, Question, Observations, Mr. Chaplin; Reply, Mr. Speaker; short debate thereon *April* 4, 370; Personal Explanation, Mr. Conybeare *April* 12, 707

Reflections on Members of this House—Sir Bernhard Samuelson and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Observations, Question, Sir Bernhard Samuelson; Reply, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *April* 18, 1121

Alleged Forgery of a Letter—Mr. Parnell and "The Times," Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, Mr. Speaker, Mr. T. W. Russell *April* 19, 1249

Public Petitions Committee—A Bogus Petition

Leave given to the Select Committee on Public Petitions to make a Special Report *April* 25, 1776; Moved, "That the Order [6th April], that the Petition of Ratepayers of Haggerston, in favour of the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Bill, do lie upon the Table, be read, and discharged" (*Sir Charles Forster*), 1778; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Bradlaugh*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned

RULES OF DEBATE

Offensive Imputations on Members of this House — Mr. Dillon and the Marquess of Hartington, Personal Explanation, Mr. Dillon *April* 21, 1417; Personal Explanations, The Marquess of Hartington, Mr. Dillon; Questions, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. John Morley; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 22, 1632

Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Parnell, Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The Financial Secretary, War Department (Mr. Brodrick), Mr. Speaker *April* 25, 1801

Questions—Alteration or Omission from Notice Paper, Question, Dr. Kenny; Answer, Mr. Speaker; short debate thereon *April* 1, 232

SITTINGS AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

The Easter Recess, Questions, Mr. Esslemont, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 5, 508

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PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*Sittings and Adjourn- of the House*—cont.

Moved, "That this House will, at the rising of the House this day, adjourn till Tuesday next" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*) *April* 7, 698; after short debate, Motion agreed to

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Mr. Jackson*) *April* 5, 617; after short debate, Motion, by leave, withdrawn

Public Business, Questions, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 14, 892

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE AND PUBLIC BUSINESS

Questions, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Mundella; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 19, 1250; Question, Mr. Childers; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 22, 1642; — *Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland) Bill*, Question, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 1, 235;—*Emigration*, Question, Mr. Rankin; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 21, 1415

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The All-Night Sitting on March 21—Extra Pay to Messengers, Question, Sir Algernon Borthwick; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 7, 689

Bills in Progress in the Upper House, Question, Mr. E. Robertson; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 14, 846

Private Bill Legislation, Question, Mr. Craig-Sellar; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 18, 1120

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

Exclusion of Fog from the House of Commons, Question, Dr. Farquharson; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *April* 25, 1798

Opening of Westminster Hall, Question, Sir Algernon Borthwick; Answer, The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) *April* 4, 357

The Police Constables at the House of Commons, Questions, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answers, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 14, 881

Parliament—The New Rules of Procedure (1882)

Rule 2 (*Adjournment of the House*)—*Matter, The Crofters Commission*

Moved, "That this House do now adjourn" (*Dr. Clark*) *April* 1, 236; after short debate, Question put, and negatived

Rule 9 (*Order in Debate*)—*Mr. T. M. Healy, Member for Longford*

Moved, "That Mr. Timothy Michael Healy be suspended from the Service of the House" (*Mr. W. H. Smith*) *April* 15, 1087; Question put; A. 118, N. 52; M. 66

Division List, Ayes and Noes, 1087

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PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*The New Rules of Procedure* (1882)—cont.
Questions, Mr. Sexton; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith), Mr. Speaker; short debate thereon *April* 18, 1123; Question, Mr. Sexton; Answer, Mr. Speaker *April* 21, 1417

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF LORDS
Sat First
April 21—The Lord Churchill, after the death of his father

PARLIAMENT—HOUSE OF COMMONS
New Writ Issued
April 18—*For* Taunton, *v.* The hon. Samuel Charles Allsopp, now Baron Hindlip, called up to the House of Peers

Parliamentary Elections (England and Wales) — Alleged Boycotting and Intimidation in England
Questions, Mr. Conybeare, Sir Charles Lewis, Mr. Cobb; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 25, 1800

PARNELL, Mr. C. S., *Cork*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, Motion for Adjournment, 175, 180; Amendt. 245, 250, 260, 261, 272, 274, 276, 325; 2R. 1138, 1157, 1208, 1214, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1225, 1226

Patent Office Committee — Report and Evidence
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PAULTON, Mr. J. M., *Durham, Bishop Auckland*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 655

PEASE, Sir J. W., *Durham, Barnard Castle*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 516
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Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1716, 1718, 1719, 1753
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1534
West Lancashire Railway, Consid. 1619, 1620

PEASE, Mr. H. F., *York, N.R., Cleveland*
War Office (Ordnance Department)—Return of Guns, 227

PEEL, Right Hon. A. W. (*see* SPEAKER, The)

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.]
(*Dr. Farquharson*)
c. Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2°" *April* 4, 463 [Bill 210]
Amendt. to leave out "now," add "upon this day six months" (*Dr. Clark*); Question proposed, "That 'now,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 76, N. 22; M. 54 (D. L. 88); Main Question put, and agreed to; Bill read 2°
Order for Committee read; Moved, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair" *April* 5, 615; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Hermon-Hodge*); after short debate, Question put; A. 93, N. 29; M. 64 (D. L. 90)

PICKARD, Mr. B., *York, W.R., Normanton*
Law and Police—Search by the Police at Hoyland Silkstone (Barnsley), 622

PICKERSGILL, Mr. E. H., *Bethnal Green, S.W.*
Employers Liability Act—Tramway Servants —"Cook *v.* The North Metropolitan Tramways Company," 77
Law and Justice (England and Wales)—Sentence on Annie Shipton, Convicted of Child Desertion, 884
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Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1733

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders Bill (*Baron Henry De Worms, Mr. Jackson*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 14 [Bill 222]
Read 2° * *April* 22

PINKERTON, Mr. J., *Galway*
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PITT-LEWIS, Mr. G., *Devon, Barnstaple*
Kensington Vestry, 3R. 50
Police (Metropolis)—Abolition of Marlborough Street Police Court, 1790

PLAYFAIR, Right Hon. Sir Lyon, *Leeds, S.*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 908

PLUNKET, Right Hon. D. R. (First Commissioner of Works), *Dublin University*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1040

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Police Force Enfranchisement Bill
(*Mr. Burdett-Coutts, Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson, Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Radcliffe Cooke, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Howard Vincent, Lord Claud Hamilton, Colonel Laurie*)
c. Read 2°, after short debate *April* 20, 1304 [Bill 17]

POOR LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES) (*Questions*)
Election of Guardians for Clapham Parish, Question, Mr. Gilliat; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *April* 7, 681
Stratford-on-Avon Board of Guardians—Inspection of Workhouses, Question, Mr. Atherley-Jones; Answer, The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) *Mar* 31, 63

POST OFFICE (ENGLAND AND WALES) (*Questions*)
Contracts—Conveyance of the Indian Mails, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 31, 76
Australian Mail Contracts, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 4, 362
Conveyance of the Indian and Australian Mails—Foreign Subsidies, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 22, 1629
Rates of Postage with the Australian Colonies, Question, Mr. Baden-Powell; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 4, 357
The Australian Colonies—Queensland Rates, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 4, 362
Credits to the Australian Governments, 1886, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 22, 1628
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POST OFFICE (*England and Wales*)—cont.
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Metropolitan District — Auxiliary Postmen, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 31, 68
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Postal Orders for Small Sums, Question, Mr. Norris; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 4, 359
Promotions in the Liverpool Post Office, Question, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 31, 55
Despatch of Continental Letters from Liverpool, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 31, 69
The Trans-Continental Mail Service, Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *Mar* 31, 75
Service to China and Japan by Canadian Pacific Railway, Question, Captain Colomb; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 18, 1109
The South Kensington Exhibition—Free Postage, Questions, Colonel Hughes-Hallett, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 1, 215; Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Labouchere; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 4, 367; Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 5, 506
The Imperial Institute — "Official Paid" Letters, Questions, Mr. Bradlaugh; Answers, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 21, 1402

TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT
"Cartes Télégrammes," Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 25, 1786
Telegraphists' Overtime, Question, Mr. Broadhurst; Answer, The Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes) *April* 4, 352

Post Office—Exercise of Official Patronage
Supply—Moved, "That Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair;" Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. Conybeare*) *April* 4, 450; after short debate, Question put; A. 65, N. 128; M. 63 (D. L. 87)

Post Office—Sunday Delivery of Letters
Moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that, on and after Sunday the 26th of June next, the Sunday Delivery of Letters, &c., by letter-carriers and rural messengers should cease throughout the
[*cont.*

Post Office—Sunday Delivery of Letters—cont.
United Kingdom, except in those districts where, after the date named, the receivers of two-thirds of the correspondence of the district petition the Postmaster General for a Sunday Delivery" (*Dr. Clark*) *April* 19, 1289
Amendt. to leave out from "That," add "a Select Committee be appointed to consider the whole question of Sunday labour, in connection with the Post Office, outside the Metropolitan District" (*Sir John Kennaway*); Question proposed, "That the words, &c.;" after short debate, Question put, and negatived
Words added; Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

owell, Mr. F. S., *Wigan*
hurch Sites (Compulsory Powers Repeal), 2R. 673
Ways and Means—Financial Statement, Comm. 1477

Power, Mr. P. J., *Waterford, E.*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), 2R. 569
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Ireland—Arms Act—Gun Licences—Ballymacarbery Petty Sessions, 349

Price, Captain G. E., *Devonport*
Admiralty—Colour Sergeants of the Royal Marines, 1796
Jubilee Year of Her Majesty's Reign, Celebration of—Naval Review—The Pensioners' Reserve, 1796

Prime Minister (*see* Salisbury, Marquess of)

Prison (Officers' Superannuation) (Scotland) Bill (*The Lord Advocate, Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, Sir Herbert Maxwell*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 20 [Bill 233]

Privy Council in England and Ireland, The—Attendance of Judges
Questions, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. Mac Neill; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 1, 231

Provand, Mr. A. D., *Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.*
British Honduras—The Governorship, 56

Public Accounts, Committee of—General Index to the Reports
Question, Mr. Howell; Answer, The Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Jackson) *April* 7, 694

Public Health Acts Amendment (Buildings in Streets) Bill
(*Captain Cotton, Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Curzon*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 20 [Bill 232]

Public Health—M. Pasteur's Treatment of Hydrophobia
Question, Mr. M'Laren; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 25, 1794

Public Libraries Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill (*Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Baggallay, Mr. Arthur Cohen, Mr. Collings, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Sir Lyon Playfair*)
c. Ordered; read 1° * *April* 6 [Bill 220]

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Secrecy of Designs, &c., Question, Colonel Hughes-Hallett; Answer, the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 7, 683
Private and Confidential Documents—Lord Brassey's "Naval Annual," Question, Mr. Dwyer Gray; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 15, 999
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Pyne, Mr. J. D., *Waterford, W.*
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QUILTER, Mr. W. C., *Suffolk, S.*
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(*Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, Mr. Jackson*)
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Paisley Grammar School Examination, Question, Dr. Cameron; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) *April* 1, 212

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Loans to Fishermen of Crofting Parishes, Question, Mr. A. Sutherland; Answer, The Lord Advocate (Mr. J. H. A. Macdonald) *April* 18, 1113
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Scotland—Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission (Inverness Scheme)
Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent to the scheme of the Education Endowments (Scotland) Commission, now lying upon the Table of the House, for the management of the endowments in the burgh and county of Inverness, known as the Royal Academy, the Mackintosh Farr Fund, the Bell Fund, the Duncan Bequest in so far as applicable to educational purposes, the Ettles Bequest, the Denoon, Colin Davidson, and Logan Bequests, the Laird of Mackintosh Bequest, and the Hector Fraser Bequest; but in so far only as concerns the Mackintosh Farr Fund" (*Mr. Fraser-Mackintosh*) *April* 25, 1937; after short debate, Question put; A. 24, N. 151; M. 127 (D.L. 95)

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- *The Committee of Examination,* Questions, Mr. M'Laren, Mr. T. M. Healy; Answers, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *Mar* 31, 85
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- *Army and Navy Estimates—Speech of Lord Randolph Churchill at the Metropolitan Music Hall, Paddington,* Question, Mr. Atherley-Jones; Answer, The First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord George Hamilton) *April* 5, 494; Questions, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Lord Randolph Churchill; Answers, The Secretary of State for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith); Question, Mr. Sexton [No reply], 495

Supply—Army and Navy Estimates—Select Committee
- Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to examine into the Army and Navy Estimates, and to report their observations thereon to the House" (*Mr. William Henry Smith*) *April* 5, 602; Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Mr. T. M. Healy*); Question put, and agreed to; Debate adjourned
- Debate resumed *April* 25, 1936; Adjourned Debate further adjourned

Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland) Bill (*Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Jackson*) [Bill 1]
c. Committee deferred, after short debate *April* 4, 460
Order for Committee read; Moved, "That this House will, on Tuesday next, resolve itself into the said Committee" *April* 5, 603
Amendt. to leave out "next," insert "fortnight" (*Mr. T. M. Healy*); Question proposed, "That 'next,' &c.;" after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn
Original Question again proposed, 605; Amendt. to leave out "next," insert "19th April" (*Mr. Chance*); Question proposed, "That 'next,' &c.;" after short debate, Question put; A. 111, N. 63; M. 48 (D. L. 89)
Original Question again proposed, 610; after short debate, Moved, "That the Debate be now adjourned" (*Dr. Tanner*); after further short debate, Question put, and negatived; Original Question put, and agreed to
Committee; Report; read 3^o *April* 14, 983
l. Read 1^a * (*The Lord Privy Seal*) *April* 18 (No. 63)
Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a" *April* 19, 1239
Amendt. to leave out ("now,") add ("this day six months") (*The Lord Denman*); after short debate, Amendt. withdrawn; Bill read 2^a
Committee; Report *April* 22, 1550

SUTHERLAND, Mr. A., *Sutherland*
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TANNER, Dr. C. K., *Cork Co., Mid*
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THEOBALD, Mr. J., *Essex, Romford*
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THOMAS, Mr. A., *Glamorgan, E.*
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TOMLINSON, Mr. W. E. M., *Preston*
Merchant Shipping Act (1854) Amendment (No. 2), Comm. *cl.* 1, 1722, 1740
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Trade and Commerce — The Petroleum Trade
Question, Mr. Lafone; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Matthews) *April* 22, 1627

TREASURY—First Lord (*see* SMITH, Right Hon. W. H.)

Treasury—Secretary to (*see* Jackson, Mr. W. L.)

Truck Bill (*Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Warmington, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Esslemont*)
Committee*—r.p. *April* 20 [Bill 109]

Truro Bishopric and Chapter Acts Amendment Bill [h.l.] (*Mr. Stuart-Wortley*)
c. Read 2°, and committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, Three to be nominated by the House and Two by the Committee of Selection *April* 25, 1946 [Bill 205]

Trusts (Scotland) Act (1867) Amendment Bill (*Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland, The Lord Advocate*)
c. Ordered ; read 1° * *April* 15 [Bill 225]

Tuite, Mr. J., *Westmeath, N.*
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Waring, Colonel T., *Down, N.*
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Watt, Mr. H., *Glasgow, Camlachie*
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Customs Revenue—Free Goods to Irish Workhouses, Questions, Mr. Hanlon; Answers, The Chief Secretary for Ireland (Mr. A. J. Balfour) *April* 14, 882; Question, Mr. O'Hanlon; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *April* 15, 998
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Assessment of Income from Foreign Sources, Question, Colonel King-Harman; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *April* 1, 222
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The Property and Income Tax — Default of Collectors, Question, Sir Frederick Mappin; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *April* 7, 697

The Financial Statement, Question, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 5, 511; Question, Mr. Sydney Buxton; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 14, 892
Appropriation of Surplus to Education in Wales, Question, Mr. Mundella; Answer, The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) *April* 21, 1416
The Local Loan, Question, Sir Edward Watkin; Answer, The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) *April* 25, 1797

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Considered in Committee *April* 21, 1459—THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
Moved, "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, the Duties of Customs now chargeable on Tea shall continue to be levied and charged on and

[*cont.*

WAYS AND MEANS—*cont.*
after the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, until the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, on the importation thereof into Great Britain or Ireland (that is to say): on
Tea . . . the pound . Sixpence" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*); after long debate, Question put, and agreed to
Resolution reported *April* 22
Moved, "That, towards raising the Supply granted to Her Majesty, there shall be charged, collected, and paid for the year which commenced on the sixth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, in respect of all Property, Profits, and Gains mentioned or described as chargeable in the Act of the sixteenth and seventeenth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-four, the following Duties of Income Tax (that is to say):—
For every Twenty Shillings of the annual value or amount of Property, Profits, and Gains chargeable under Schedules (A), (C), (D), or (E) of the said Act, the Duty of Seven Pence;
And for every Twenty Shillings of the annual value of the occupation of Lands, Tenements, Hereditaments, and Heritages chargeable under Schedule (B) of the said Act,—
In England the Duty of Three Pence Halfpenny;
In Scotland and Ireland respectively, the Duty of Two Pence Halfpenny;
Subject to the provisions contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Act of the fifth and sixth years of Her Majesty's reign, chapter thirty-five, for the exemption of persons whose income is less than One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, and in section eight of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1876,' for the relief of persons whose income is less than Four Hundred Pounds" (*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) *April* 25, 1804; after long debate, Question put, and agreed to; other Resolutions moved, and agreed to
Moved, "That the Chairman do report the Resolutions to the House," 1935; after short debate, Question put, and agreed to
Resolutions reported *April* 26
[See title *Customs and Inland Revenue Bill*]

WEBSTER, Sir R. E. (Attorney General), *Isle of Wight*
Criminal Law Amendment (Ireland), Motion for Leave, 152, 157, 158, 159, 162; 2R. 1202, 1203
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Supreme Court of Judicature (Ireland), Comm. *cl.* 2, 987; 3R. *ib.*

Webster, Mr. R. G., *St. Pancras, E.*
Land Tenure (Scotland), 2R. Amendt. 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337
Ways and Means—Allocation of the Carriage Tax in the Metropolis, 1803

Western Pacific — Regulations for the Labour Traffic
Question, Sir George Campbell; Answer, The Secretary of State for the Colonies (Sir Henry Holland) *April* 21, 1405
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